ANECDOTES
OF
INDIAN LIFE

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INDIAN LIFE, ETC ETC.

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PART I

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A CONSCIENTIOUS MAN.

BABU AKSHOY KUMAR MUKHERJI of Nasiarikully was an educational officer of high rank, Headmaster of the Hare School in Calcutta, the premier school in Bengal. Sir Alfred Croft, a former Director of Public Instruction in the province, spoke of him as a man of high ability in his profession and character. The story here is an instance of his conscientiousness.

A life insurance agent marked Akshoy Babu as a likely client and stuck to him. He begged him to insure his life through his agency and lectured him off and on on the necessity of making some provision for his little children and the ease and expediency of life insurance. "But I should have a sound body to have my life accepted by your company ? I do not have it. I have kidney troubles." " Have you ?" answered the eager agent, " don't bother about

them. I can so arrange with the company's doctor for a consideration, of course, that he certifies you to be in perfect health—no health sounder. Don't worry yourself, please, about your kidneys." At this Akshoy Babu looked serious and gravely said, " I know I have the disease. A certificate cannot remove it either from my body or my mind. Even though your company may accept it, I cannot. I shall not defraud it with the knowledge I possess."

The agent gave up the sturdy man of conscience in despair.

WEIGHING IN THE BALANCE.

THE first-born male heir does not inherit all the property of the father among the Hindus excepting in the families of princes in which the law of primogeniture obtains. The property is divided in equal shares among the sons. Babu Bhudeb Mukherji who began the world as a poor school master ended by amassing a respectable fortune to be divided between his two sons. He knew that the two brothers had but one soul in two bodies, they loved each other so tenderly, and that, consequently, they would not quarrel over the division. Yet he parted the property before his death to be taken possesion of by them when he was no more. He had two houses, one finer than the other and with the special advantage of standing on the bank of the Hughly at Chinsura. This one was allotted to the younger son. When he read this in the deed, he went to his elder brother and said, "This should not be ; you being our father's first-born should have the finer house." Govindadev answered smiling, "No darling, it is at my special prayer that father leaves that house to you. Besides, I see no

injustice in it. I am by seven years your elder. Think of the seven years more of paternal love that I have enjoyed. Is that nothing? Put that into my scale and the house into yours and see how the house kicks the beam."

Here was brotherly love of the first water.

VIDYASAGAR AND AN ARISTOCRAT.

VIDYASAGAR fills far more space in the folk-lore of Bengal intended " to point a moral " than any other man of his or of any other time, and that is because he scarcely did anything but that it was out of the common run of doings and somehow or other strikingly superior to them. While he lived, he was the best beloved and revered man in Bengal and among his admirers were gentle and simple, high and low, young and old, and learned and illiterate. The object of veneration of the proudest in the land he never was conscious of the high position he held in society and might be as often seen chatting cheerfully with the rugged day-labourer before his hovel or the dirty booth-keeper by the road side who were the recipients of his large-hearted affection as in the drawing-rooms of palaces whose owner felt honoured by his visit.

It so happened once that while he sat on a dirty carpet spread for him under the porch of a small grocery shop and was talking to the grocer, a glittering phaeton came driving up and as soon as its young occupant saw Vidyàsàgar, he had

it stopped for a second and seemed inclined to get down and pay his respects to the grand good man before he passed on. But something weighed with him against the purpose and the next instant he countermanded his order and the carriage rolled away. Vidyàsàgar smiled.

When next time he met the young aristocrat, he said, " You were in a nice fix the other day, my dear. You were anxious to come down to me when you saw me at the shop. Yet you could not in consideration of the place where I was. What would the world say when it saw or heard of your saluting the feet of a man who sat in a squalid place talking to low people ? So prudence won the day and you passed on ; eh, my child ? " Vidyàsàgar was as plain-spoken as he was good. "Indeed, sir, you are sometimes seen in places and company of which we cannot but feel ashamed." "Well then, my little lord," retorted Vidyàsàgar, "the best thing for you to do in that case would be to cut me altogether. I tell you I cannot give up my poor and lowly, the simple and sincere-hearted and will associate with them whenever need be."

The youngman hung down his head.

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A BLUNT SOLDIER.

A MOGHUL soldier who had fought for Babar in the field of Panipat had been assigned some lands in reward for his service. He had afterwards retired from active life and lived on them. It so happened in course of time that some one having interest at the imperial court dispossessed him, and the soldier in his distress applied to the Emperor himself for redress. Babar commanded one of his ministers to look into the man's right and if it was just, to have his lands restored to him. The minister slept over the behest and weeks and months passed without bringing to the soldier the justice he had sought for. His patience almost worn out, he solicited and obtained another audience with Babar,—princes were so accessible in those good old days. "Your Majesty condescended to charge a minister with doing me justice" said the soldier, "and I have waited weary long for it, and it has not yet been done. Might not you yourself look into my case? I did not fight for you at Panipat by proxy, but myself charged your enemy lance in rest and suffered wounds in my own person for you.

Might I not expect similar treatment from your Majesty ?"

The emperor was shamed into following the course his blunt soldier proposed.

A SIGHT FOR THE ANGELS TO LOOK ON.

VIDYASAGAR had the softest heart in the world, but his sinews were strong "as iron bands" and he was accustomed to all manners of toil and hardship. A man in very well-to-do circumstances he scarcely ever used a vehicle of any kind, but preferred to walk if the way was not prohibitively long. He could also walk faster than most men, could swim across a river, carry a load on his head, when he thought there was need for it, and live on the simplest fare.

He was a deep scholar, the Principal of a great college and a maker of Bengali prose; but far more than all this he was a lover of his kind.

Once upon a time Vidyàsàgar was journeying to Kalna with Babu Girish Chandra Vidyàratna, a scholar like himself and a man with a heart of gold, for his companion. They were walking. They came across a porter who, it seemed, had been stricken with the dread cholera, one of the two curses of Bengal, and lay dying by the roadside. His burden lay by him. He had been

faintly appealing at times to the passers-by for help ; but none had helped. These common men had walked away the faster for fear of catching the contagion from him ; for cholera was thought to be a fearfully contagious disease. Vidyàsàgar took the situation at a glance and his soul melted at once in love and pity. "Vidyàratna," said he addressing his companion, "You can take up the man's burden, I think, and carry it while I carry him in my arms. To the hospital, my dear sir, to the hospital at Kalna at our fastest speed." Without more ado he tenderly lifted the man up on his arms—a dirty, foul-smelling rustic, bigger than himself—placed him on his breast and shoulders and holding him there with all care sped along, Vidyàratna, no mean companion for such a man, with the load on his head marching behind. It was a sight for angels to look on. They reached the small town, two miles from the spot, in about half an hour, placed the man under the care of the doctor in the hospital and his assistants and did not consider themselves relieved of their duty until they had made all possible arrangements for the treatment and comfort of the afflicted man.

SINGING TO PLEASE GOD.

TANSEN, court singer and friend of Akbar the Great, Moghul Emperor of India, a sort of song-god whom Indian musicians still swear by, was a disciple of Haridas who not only possessed the highest science and art and the sweetest voice but also a soul that was ecstatic with love of God. The man lived the life of a recluse and never stirred out of his hermitage. Upon a day the Emperor wishing to hear him sing called at his place accompanied by Tansen. The two sat at the saint's feet after they had paid him his due reverence, and Tansen began to hum a devotional song. That was his way to draw his teacher out to sing. Haridas sang entranced and divinely.

Returning home Akbar begged Tansen to sing that song again, for since Haridas's voice had ceased to vibrate in his soul, he felt a void in it which nothing could fill up. Tansen sang. At the conclusion his master than whom none had greater admiration for his genius said, "Dear friend, you have sung well,—as you always do, excellently well indeed. But, my dear, I know

not what there was lacking in your singing which marked it inferior in quality to your master's." "It could not but be so," readily replied Tansen, "my master sang to please God, whereas I sang to please only you."

THE FAITHFUL GUARD.

IBRAHIM Adham who afterwards earned the celebrity of a saint was in early life employed by a rich man to watch over his orchard. The master one day came in with a few friends when the mango was in season and bade Ibrahim pluck and fetch him a few ripe and sweet fruits for the company. Ibrahim obeyed ; but all the mangoes he brought turned out sour. The master was thereupon annoyed and rated him for his ignorance saying, "You have been in the place for three years and do not know the sweet mangoes from the sour ?" Ibrahim meekly replied, "Master, I have guarded the trees having been appointed to guard them ; never tasted the fruits. How should I know ?"

Here was a faithful servant who never strayed from the straight path of duty, at least, to his own advantage.

A LITTLE RAJPUT HERO.

THE battle raged "loud and long" at Gheria in 1740 between Sarfaraz Khan, Nawab of Bengal, who would not give up his vice-regal throne and Muhammad Ali whom the Emperor of Delhi, displeased with Sarfaraz, had nominated to it. Sarfaraz fought like a lion. When surrounded by the enemy in a part of the battle field, he on the back of his war-elephant was the target of a hundred muskets and his driver had offered to exchange places with him, himself occupying the seat of honour in the *howdah* (protected seat on the back of the animal) and giving him his on the neck, so that he, the driver, might draw all the attention of the enemy to himself, he had smilingly said, "No, my good man, your master is not afraid of death." But his days were numbered ; he was killed in the fight.

It is not, however, of him that I meant to speak. The subject of the story is Jalim Singh, son of Bejoy Singh, a Rajput captain in Sarfaraz Khan's army. Jalim was only nine years old, but like Casabianca he was "a creature of heroic blood." He had accompanied his father to the field and rode his small pony behind him, his

small sword girt on and his small lance held in his grip in imitation of his father. He was having his "baptism of fire." When his father fell fighting in the rear and the enemy surrounded him to rifle him, Jalim sprang down and stood by his dead father's side and brandishing his tiny sword—his eyes emitting sparks of fire—cried out at the top of his little voice, "No Mussalman touches my father's body. He dies who approaches it !" Muhammad Ali himself was among those who heard this challenge. He looked at the little hero and his heart overflowed with admiration. "Don't touch the dead man," cried he to all about him, "nor his son." And presently coming up he bowed his head to the noble boy and said, "Sheathe your sword, for I, Muhammad Ali, assure you that no Moslem shall touch your father's body, but it shall be borne in all honour by some Rajputs in my service and cremated on the bank of the Ganges according to your Hindu rites. And, my little hero, if you will have me for your protector and father now that your own father is gone, you are thrice welcome."

Nothing, however, is known of the subsequent development of so much promise.

THOUGHT FOR OTHERS.

TARA KANTA RAY, grand-uncle of the late Babu Dwijendra Lal Ray, one of Bengal's great humourist-poets, was distinguished by his thought for others. An impressive instance to the point, one that his nephew, Kartikeya Ray, has lovingly dwelt on in his autobiography, is given in the following story :—

Tarakanta Roy was wont to spend a large part of the evening in the palace with the then Raja of Krishnagar between whom and himself there was mutual regard and friendship. His cook used to sit up for him at home with his supper awaiting his return and would not retire to rest until he had waited on his master at his meal and seen him to bed. One evening Tarakanta returned home at his usual hour and entering his bedroom found his servant sleeping deeply in his bed—a liberty which he could be scarcely expected to take, seeing that he was a good servant who knew his place. The master did not disturb him, but softly passed into the next room where he managed to eat his supper without the servant's customary attendance and

then returning as softly into his bedroom improvised a bed for himself on the floor with a mat and a few other things and lay awake in it the whole night, for he could not sleep. His apology for a bed was hard and without pillows and coverlet to which he was accustomed. The season was winter and the night, cold. The affair got wind the next morning not through him but through the servant himself who conscience-stricken, when he had waked at daybreak, at finding himself in his master's luxurious bed and his master on a cold, hard mat and a few rags on the floor, had run like one demented out of the room and blurted out what had happened to all he met with. It caused much amusement in the house and made Tarakanta the idol of all who heard it. He himself saw nothing extraordinary in his act. He had thought, he said, that the servant had been suddenly taken ill. Would it be humane, would it be right to knock him up ?

THE PERSEVERING STUDENT.

BOPEDEV, author of one of the two greatest grammars of the Sanskrit language, did not display his mental capacities in the early days of his student life. On the contrary, he was so dull that he could make but little progress. Grammar was particularly his aversion. The teacher's rebuke and rod one day drove him from the school in despair and he sought a neighbouring tank in the cool and blue waters of which he proposed to end his misery by drowning himself. But as he sat on the edge of the water for a while brooding over his purpose, his eyes fell on a large stone the centre of which was worn into a cavity with the constant setting on the spot of earthen pitchers by the women who fetched water from the tank before they carried them away poised on their heads. Bopedev pondered over the circumstance : Here was hard stone worn in by frail earthen pots constantly pressing against it. How strange ! Then the thought flashed into him like an inspiration that it should not be stranger if his intelligence, weak as it was, should penetrate his dense ignorance by

persistent rubbing against it. The experiment was worth trying. He resolved to try it, and shaking off his despondence he returned to his studies and applied himself to them with such single-hearted devotion that he made headway rapidly and ended in ripe time by being one of the greatest Indian scholars of all ages.

A LOVE-OFFERING.

YOUNG Jogendra Nath Chatterji of Jeletola in Calcutta was a junior attorney-at-law. By his death he lives in the hearts of men who can appreciate the grandeur of selfless love in man. He was bathing one day in the Hughly in the midst of a crowd. It was the season of the rains; the river was full and the current strong. Suddenly a bather, a perfect stranger to him, went beyond his depth and sank. For just a second his head was seen above the surface of the turbid water, a gurgling cry of agony was heard and the head disappeared again. But hardly had it done so before Jogendra Babu dashed forward and with a few strong sweeping strokes of his arms reached the spot where the bubbles raised by the struggles of the drowning man had not yet broken. He dived after him, and fetched him up in a few seconds and tried to keep him afloat. He was a heavy weight; but what was more serious, he clung to him with the tenacity of despair. In the meantime, a small boat had pushed out from the bank to their rescue. When it reached them, Jogendra Babu must have been

in the last stage of exhaustion. The other man was partly on his back and on top of him. He was first lifted into the boat. Then looking down the next instant the two rescuers saw to their dismay that the young gentleman was gone. One of the two men plunged after him, but he did not find him. The search was long, but fruitless.

Thus did Jogendra Babu purchase a life with his own and show a love before which the world has alwavs bowed its reverent head.

A DUTIFUL JUDGE.

SULTAN Gyesuddin of Delhi was a skilful archer. He had acquired this skill, as skill in all other things is acquired, by constant practice. Once while he was practising, a rather careless arrow of his missed the target and wounded a poor widow's son who was loafing about. The widow in her grief forgot her king in the wanton tyrant who had injured her dearly beloved son and complained to the Kazi, the chief judge. And what did the Kazi do ? He summoned the king to his court after careful consideration of the complaint not under the style of "His Majesty Gyesuddin, the King" but under that of "Gyesuddin, archer" ; and when he came, bade him answer the charge. The king, however, soon compounded with the widow, now that the first paroxysm of her grief was over, expressing to her his sincere sorrow at what had happened and paying her a large compensation in money. Then, when the widow came forward and said, "Worshipful Kazi, I withdraw my complaint, for I have no more any grievance," the Kazi dismissed the King. And as the latter left the

court, the judge followed him and beyond its precincts knelt to his prince and did him all dutiful obeisance. Said he, "In my court of justice and upon the seat of judgment I could bend my head to none but Allah, the one God, and his law, the Koran. Hence I called on you to appear before me so that I might judge between you and the woman. Did I wrong!"
"No," replied the Sultan warmly, "I honour you for your courage and sense of duty. If you had failed in either, your high and sacred seat should not have known you any longer."

This story supplies a beautiful parallel to that of Judge Gascoigne and the wild "Prince Hal" of "Old England" and the moral deducible is the same.

AN UNCOMMON BEGGAR.

MUKDUM Shah was a *fakeer*, a beggar, but not of the low type you meet with any where. Of him it is told that on a Friday, the sabbath of the Mussalman, he found himself in the principal mosque at Patna in a company made up of the Nawab of the place and his retainers and went through the evening *nemaz* or prayer with them. After this was over, the Nawab uttered a special prayer to the effect: "Allah, give me more wealth, more health, more power, and more fame among my fellow-men." Then he distributed alms, as his custom was, among the beggars who were assembled at the gate of the mosque. Seeing that Mukdum Shah passed out without waiting to receive his dole, the Nawab called out and asked him to do so. But the *fakeer* walked on answering back, "Nawab, I do not beg of beggars!"

A PASSIONATE TEACHER.

APART from the other disadvantages of a hasty, irritable temper, the ridiculous pass to which its unfortunate possessor is sometimes brought by it should provide a sufficient warning.

The small primary school in the village of Ranigram once boasted a pedagogue, Harihar Dutt by name, whose petulance passed into a by-word among the villagers. When in a passion in which he often was, he sputtered in his speech or was nearly choked by it, so that his pupils shaking in every limb could but imperfectly catch his words. Once upon a time in the midst of the commotion raised by himself—the swish ! swish ! of his birch, the shrieks of the sufferers, his storming and swearing—he gibbered out to a lad, yet untouched but almost beside himself with fear, a question which arose from the text that was being read in the class—"Who has created the universe ?" The poor boy did not know what was asked ; he was too fully preoccupied. He supposed it was about some sin of commission on his own part that that angry query was made and still retaining self-possession enough to re-

member that the tyrant sometimes lightly punished a sinner who confessed, piteously said, "Please sir, I have ; but I shall do so no more !"

Who was more to pity—the teacher or his pupil ?

A NURSE'S DEVOTION.

THE story of the Sepoy mutiny forms one of the darkest chapters in the annals of British India. If the sepoys were inhuman and fierce, no less inhuman and fierce was the retributive judgment that was dealt out to them while the country was still enveloped in the flame. But now and then we come across an anecdote of heroism and self-sacrifice of the Briton or Indian which very agreeably relieves the monotony of the sickening story. Here is an act of sacrifice on the altar of love performed by a woman of the lowest class of the Indian society.

The British residents of Cawnpore had proposed to Nana Sahib, a leader of the mutiny, the surrender of the city to him on the condition that they should be allowed to depart across the river unmolested. This proposal had been agreed to. The Europeans marched out accordingly—men, women and children—with their attendants and servants trusting implicitly to Nana's word, and some had just started their boats on the river, others had just got on board theirs and the rest were still on the bank when by the treacherous Maharatta's command fire was

opened upon them all. The boats were crushed in and sunk, the passengers shot in the water and those who were on the bank or tried to escape by land were surrounded. A woman with an English child, two years old, at her breast and her own son at her heels tried to slip through the cordon. She was the child's nurse and had cherished him with a love and devotion that could only be a mother's. The little boy's parents had both been killed by the sepoys. A sepoy with a drawn sword dripping blood demanded of the woman to set the child on the ground. She only held it the tighter at her breast, covered it with her scarf and bent over it in answer. The monster pricked the nurse's head with the point of his sword, made a pass with it at her own son who clung to her and threatened to kill both if the English child was not immediately surrendered. She would not yield, come what might, and she full well knew what would come. The sword flashed, it descended and with its descent her head rolled on the ground. The next blow cut in two the English child for whom she had given her life, alas! in vain.

A PRINCE'S ANSWER.

SOLEIMAN, Dara's son, was treacherously handed over by the Raja of Sreenagar to the agents of the cruel usurper, Aurangzebe, and brought heavily fettered to Delhi on the back of a lean elephant and paraded through the streets of the city. His crime was that he had fought for his father, the lawful heir to the throne. Whole Delhi wept to see the sight, but wept in secret for fear of the tyrant. So young, so handsome, so brave, to meet with such an end! When at last he was brought before his uncle, the latter ordered the heavy iron chains about his feet to be taken off, but the hands still remained secured in gilded fetters. It is said that Soleiman's appearance and bearing momentarily moved even Aurangzebe's heart which knew no melting. He spoke softly to him and assured him of safety and his protection. But Soleiman full well knew what the assurance was worth coming, as it did, from his father's murderer. Besides, even though it could be relied upon, he could not accept mercy from such hands. So, when the emperor said, "What would you have of me, Soleiman?" "A speedy

death, your Majesty," answered the prince, "death at one blow ; nothing more"—a princely answer, indeed, which Khafi Khan, the Moghul historian, has proudly recorded to be admired in all times.

THE BEGGAR'S CRY.

ASAF-UD-DOWLAH, Nawab of Oudh, was a scholar, a man of piety and unstinted charity, and he hated flattery in every form. Once he heard a *fakeer* (a beggar) crying in the streets of his capital, Lucknow,—"Him does Nawab Asaf-ud-dowlah favour whom God has set his face against!" That was his begging cry. The Nawab bade one of his attendants tell the beggar to call on him the following day for alms. That day a water-melon was given him by order of the Nawab in which a few gold pieces had been artfully concealed. The man was disgusted at so poor a gift, for he had expected what might be a fortune to him. He sold it off for a couple of coppers as quickly as he could. But bethinking himself of making another appeal to the Nawab's generosity or vanity by his subtle flattery, as he conceived his cry to be, he went again and managed to utter it again in his hearing. The Nawab had him brought to his presence. "What had you yesterday from me for alms?" asked the Nawab. "A water-melon, your Majesty." "What did you do with it?" "I sold it." "Did you know it contained

a few gold pieces?" "No, your Majesty," answered the beggar in manifest chagrin, "I did not know." "Then go your way, my man of the yellow robe," said the Nawab, "and henceforth alter your cry to say "Him Nawab Asaf-ud-dowlah *cannot* favour whom God has set his face against!"

STONES AND STONES.

A RAJA of a large state in Orissa had drawerfuls of sparkling stones in a steel chest in a strong room day and night guarded by a *posse* of armed men. The only use which the Raja seemed to have for them was to bring them out on rare occasions and show them to distinguished visitors and dilate on their character, quality and price and the manner, in which, and the time when, and the person by whom they had been acquired. One of these visitors, of a utilitarian turn of mind, a man of common sense, took the liberty to ask the Raja how much his stones yielded him *per annum*. "Yield me, my good sir!" exclaimed the Raja, astonished at the odd query, "why, they yield me nothing. On the contrary, they cost me a few thousand rupees yearly in the salaries of the two officers who look after their safe keeping and of the men of the guard about the strong room." The visitor demurely remarked, "A poor widow in my neighbourhood has a pair of (mill-)stones which yield her her livelihood. They cost her only a rupee and-a-half in buying and cost her absolutely nothing in keeping."

AN HONEST ANSWER.

A YOUNG Bengalee sought employment in a shop in the up-country in which there was a vacancy. There were other candidates. They all appeared before the chief manager at the appointed hour. He said speaking to the candidates, "I want a willing man, a very industrious man who should not grumble at the hardest, the most grinding labour." Then turning to one of the applicants, "Do you like such labour?" asked he. The applicant answered he did. The query was repeated to all the rest, one after another, and they all, excepting the Bengalee, gave a like answer in a variety of forms :—they liked the hardest labour, and nothing better, and would gladly go through it. The Bengalee said, "Sir, I do not like hard labour for my daily portion. No one does, I believe. I shall work as much as I can without a strain and, I promise you, even more, when necessity shall occasionally call for additional exertion on my part and that from a sense of duty and to please you." This answer which bore the stamp of honesty on its face secured the post to the Bengalee.

PRACTICAL AND UNPRACTICAL.

JIJIBHOY Cowasji, a Parsee merchant of Bombay, had a very prosperous business. But an unfortunate speculation in Egyptian cotton ruined him. A disgraced insolvent he died by his own hand. He left two sons in an almost destitute condition and one or two capitalist friends who might have rendered him some help in his misfortune, but had no opportunity of doing so, for he had made a close secret of the state of his affairs and the catastrophe was sudden. About two years after their father's death the two sons approached one of these gentlemen with the prayer that he would start them in life with some capital on loan. He was quite willing ; but he would test the capabilities of the young men before he lent them any money. "What have you been doing these two years ?" asked he of the elder. "Doing nothing very tangible," answered the latter, "but you see, sir, I have not been altogether idle ; I have been planning business of various sorts." And he showed him various papers scribbled over with various ambitious schemes and fanciful prospectuses. The

younger brother called in said in answer to the same query that a little time after his father's death he had set up a small shop of grocery and was just contriving to keep his head above the water. But he wanted to enlarge his business and get on step by step. The gentleman perfectly understood the nature of the two. The first was an idler and visionary who could not make a small beginning and rise gradually and naturally. His chance of success in life was problematical. The second was practical who would not build except on sure foundations. The gentleman placed a cheque for 5,000 rupees in his hands. The other he took as an apprentice into his own firm to teach him the sound ways of business.

A PRINCE'S LOVE OF HIS WIFE.

AMONG the Moghul princes of India there was little love between brother and brother, sons of the same mother or otherwise; there were those who rose against their fathers and fought them and might have killed them,—one actually deposed and incarcerated his; and those who were guilty of similar treatment to their sons and nephews. But very few sinned against their wives. Nay, most of them very tenderly loved them. Akber allowed the utmost religious liberty to his Hindu wife and built her a temple to her deity in his seraglio; Jahangir yielded not only his empire but also himself unconditionally to his Nurjehan; and his son Shajahan's grief at the death of his Mumtajmahal crystalised into the mausoleum, "the dream in marble," which is even now a wonder of the world. You may read these facts in all books of Moghul history, but scarcely any mention has been made in their pages of the self-less love of the unfortunate Dara Sekoh for his wife.

After his defeat by Aurangzebe in the battle in Ajmer, Dara fled towards Ahmedabad in

which city he hoped to find refuge and support. He was deserted by his troops, the survivors of the battle, during the flight which was through the desert ; and he was harassed by the Coles, a fierce people, through whose country he fled. His wife who had never left his side since the war of succession had begun had been wounded in the battle. Dr. Bernier, the French traveller, who fell in with the prince's party at this time, says that Dara thought more anxiously about the wound of his wife than about the loss of his throne and forced him to stop in his journey to Delhi and stay with his party to treat and heal the wound. It was almost healed ; but a malignant fever supervening the poor lady was laid up again. She died shortly afterwards in her husband's arms in Sindh. The blow prostrated her husband altogether. Life and empire seemed worth little to him now. His wife had expressed a wish that she might be buried in Lahore where she had spent a happy childhood. This last wish must be carried out. The deserted and fugitive prince had only a handful of men with him ; yet he detailed half of them to escort the remains to distant Lahore. Not only did he do this, but he would not also stir from the

spot where his wife had breathed her last and resume his flight, although he knew that for his own safety and in the interest of all he was fighting for not a moment was to be lost, until the period of mourning was over. The consequence of this unwisdom was that he was easily and speedily captured by the chief of Jun. His subsequent fate is well-known.

A BRAVE WOMAN.

THE unfortunate Nawab Seraj-ud-dowlah whose defeat on the field of Plassey laid the foundation of the British empire in India had created many enemies among his countrymen, Hindu and Mahomedan. They wanted to dethrone him. They conspired and plotted long, now in the house of one of them and now in that of another and finally decided to call in the aid of the English at Calcutta. This decision was not adopted without the strongest opposition from one of the conspirators. That one was a lady, Ranee Bhabanee of Natore, who, although she certainly wanted that the profligate Nawab should go, did not yet want that the powerful foreigners should be allowed to interfere in a domestic quarrel. When it had been argued against this that by themselves they were not strong enough for their purpose, she had spoken words of scorn and had left the cabal. The conspirators met once or twice again, but the Ranee was not with them. She only sent them a few suits of woman's clothes as much as to say that they were all women and ought to assume the woman's garb, if they had not courage and strength enough to fight for themselves and for their own liberation.

PUNISHED AND REWARDED.

KALI Charan Ghosh, shortly, Kalu Ghosh, of Akna in the district of Hughli, was only a clerk to the general commanding the forces employed against the Raja of Bharatpur in the first war. But he was very intelligent and possessed of military instincts. He was brave and trustworthy and enjoyed the favour and confidence of the general and the subordinate officers. Having served long with men whose business it was to lead in war and fight, he understood tactics and fighting, and it was only want of opportunity which had not made an actual leader and warrior of him.

Now, it so happened that in an engagement with the enemy, the few European officers of the sepoy companies employed were all either killed or disabled. The men wavered, for there was a panic among them, and were in imminent peril of destruction. So the *havildars* and *subadars* (Indian officers) came up to Kalu Ghosh and said, "Clerk Babu, you can save us; lead us in this emergency." Ghosh felt he could, and as the call had come, he donned the uniform of an

officer who lay dead in the field and re-formed the soldiers and not only withstood the enemy's onslaught, but also led them to ultimate victory. The companies were thus saved from annihilation and the prestige of the Company's army did not suffer.

At the close of the campaign Kalu Ghosh was court-martialled. He was found guilty of wearing the uniform of an officer which he was not entitled to wear and of acting in his capacity which he should not have done and was mulcted in the sum of 500 rupees ; but at the same time he was rewarded with a purse of 30,000 rupees for his gallant and skilful leading in the field in a great crisis and for his success ! The judgment was acclaimed by all right-thinking men.

AN OPINION ON CHANGE OF OPINION.

Bankim Chandra Chatterji, our Sir Walter Scott, was once reproached with fickleness on his declaring a change of views upon a certain matter ; whereupon he observed, "He who has never been forced to change any pre-conceived opinion was born perfect which I was not ; and he who has changed it, but does not avow the fact is a hypocrite which I do not wish to be."

SHUNNING OF VANITIES.

HINDU and Mussalman holy men resolutely discard all earthly vanities regarding them as shackles to the soul in its upward progress. Ramkrishna Paramahansa of Dakshineswar, one of the holy men of the last century, whose life Max Müller has written in reverent regard and whose chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda, speaking in the parliament of religion at Chicago revealed to the western people the sublimity of the Hindu faith—this Ramkrishna cared absolutely nothing for "the good things" of this world. Once upon a time a disciple presented him with a piece of valuable silk cloth to wear at worship, silk being considered purer than cotton or linen stuff. Ramkrishna put it on as desired, and at worship that day he felt inclined to dispose it about his person in such a way that it might not be damaged in his squatting or rising or prostrating himself in his devotional process. The thought of this inclination sent a shudder through his soul. Was he going to care more for a piece of showy rag than for the proper performance of the rites? Here was a loop-hole for the power of evil to get in through and possess him. He tore the cloth off his body in breathless trepidation and cast it into the river flowing close by his temple.

A PENANCE.

THE ways by which sin enters the sould are not straight royal roads, but secret and dark paths which need to be carefully closed. Not only acts which are not right but even thoughts of them should be resolutely shunned ; and it is commanded that penance more or less severe should be inflicted on and undergone by the tempted to associate in his mind a feeling of pain and horror with the doing and thinking of evil.

Ranee Sharat Sundaree of Putia was a saintly woman. Her holy memory is cherished in Bengal as that of Mirabai in Rajputana. From the wordly point of view she was very unfortunate, for she had lost her dearly beloved husband before she was well out of her teens and you know that a high caste Hindu woman loses all (from the wordly point of view, of course), when she loses her husband. She cannot marry again. She must renounce the comforts of the flesh and live the life of an ascetic. Such a life is harder to live, it is a sorer trial when the widow has wealth and rank and the other means of carnal

enjoyment. Sharat Sundaree the young and exquisitely beautiful widow, was one of the wealthiest of Bengal's aristocracy.

Mrs. Welsh, wife of the magistrate of Rajshahi, came on a visit to her. She had heard of her personal charms, her blameless character and her charities. She came to see with her own eyes what she was like. She had a long conversation with her on various topics and they were both delighted. But, as fate would have it, towards its close Mrs. Welsh in an overflow of sympathy for her desolate condition in the midst of all her wealth quite innocently said, "Dear Rani, you might marry again, you are so young and beautiful, and be happy." As soon as these words were uttered, a cloud came on and overspread the Ranee's cheerful face, the serene smile disappeared from her lips and, presently, her bright eyes were moistened and large drops gathered in their corners. The English woman perceived too late that she had touched a chord which she ought to have let severely alone; and in her repentance she apologised profusely and sincerely. The Ranee only gently said, "You need not so afflict yourself, madam; you could not know that we can marry but once; our

husbands are our husbands in life and death. We fall by marrying a second time."

The interview took place in an early morning. When it was ended, Sharat Sundaree bathed in holy water and fasted the whole day and night in penance for listening to a sinful suggestion.

THE TEACHER TAUGHT.

THE Reverend Dr. Miller of Madras, the founder of the Christian college in the city, was, with all his piety, bigoted and intolerant in the early days of his career in India. He used to hold a theological meeting every week in which his senior students, Hindus, Mussalmans, and others were allowed the liberty of discussion. In one of these meetings the immanence of God, the root principle of the Vedanta, a Hindu philosophy, was being debated. The doctor violently differed with his Hindu scholars who believed in it and in his impatience thrust out one of his booted feet to them saying, "Worship it—worship my boot. If you believe God is in everything, He must be in it!" The students left the room in a body in the first moments of their disgust at the conduct of the teacher. But a while after one of them, a Hindu, returned and meekly said to the doctor, "Excuse us, sir; we can really worship God in your boots, only your manner which was abrupt and uncommon annoyed us."

Years after, speaking in England Dr. Miller

was reported to have said, "Remember what the Hindu religion has given to the world. It has given the idea of the immanence of God and of the solidarity of man."

SAVING A FISH.

THE three great indigenous religions of India, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, teach love to all living beings, all those that live on the surface of the earth, in the air and water. Many centuries of this teaching has made universal love the warp and the weft of the Indian's heart and I do not hesitate to say that the average Aryan, Indian, Hindu, Buddhist or Jain is more "full of the milk of human kindness" than the average man of any other land, and race and creed. The story I shall tell here has nothing dramatic in it but it shows how any child of India born in any of its three great religions is a potential Buddha who nursed the wounded swan at his breast and claimed it as his own by right of "mercy and the lordliness of love" against his cousin who claimed it by right of his bow and arrow.

Govinda Chandra Ray was only a boy of ten who was journeying by boat to Pabna in the company of his father and uncle. It was a season when the broad rivers of Eastern Bengal yielded little fish; so that the voyagers had lived on a vegetable diet for days together which

was particularly distasteful to Govinda's father, a great lover of piscine food. One day, however, they had a trout of middle size from a fisherman, just caught in a net and still as full of life as in the water. Govinda's father was delighted, but it made the lad's little heart sad to think that the living thing should be sacrificed to man's sinful appetite. The sadness deepened into an agony and he could not rest until he had rescued it. "Papa," said he to his father, as he stood up to him, "give me the fish, please; I want it." The father did not understand him; he answered, "Well, it is yours, but take care it does not slip into the water from your hands." And while Govinda replied, "I want it for that very purpose," he quickly lifted it with both hands and gently slipped it into the water. Then with his young eyes beaming with joy he stood up to his father again and said, "Papa, I have saved a life!"

WATCHING A PILE OF FIRE-WOOD.

Of the late Babu Prankrishna Ganguli of Bally in Howrah of whom I shall tell another story hereafter, the village tradition has handed down to us how one summer evening a wood-cutter of his village who knew him—everybody knew him and he knew every body within miles of his dwelling place—this wood-cutter accosted him on the bank of the river where he had piled up some fire-wood saying, "Ganguli *Mashaya*, (*Mashaya* or *Mahashaya* is sir or Mr.) would you watch for me this pile, if you have nothing better to do just now, while I run home and fetch my people to carry it off to its place in the bazar"? Prankrishna readily consented. He was every man and woman's own to whom none hesitated to make a request for service; and he never thought it beneath him to lend a hand to a neighbour. He sat on the pile and the man went away.

Time passed; darkness descended on the earth; heavy clouds which had been gathering overhead since the sun-set burst into a torrent of rain. Ganguli sat on the pile still, got drenched to the skin and began to shiver. He did not

leave it for shelter ; that would be deserting his charge and the wood might be stolen. So he sat on and suffered until, at last, the wood-cutter returned with his people at about 10 when the rain had held. The man was very sorry and apologised, "You might leave the wood here and seek home rather than suffer so ;" said he, "I thought you would do it." "Oh, no," replied Prankrishna, "how could I ? It was all your property, my poor man ; you might be robbed, my poor man !"

RAMTANU'S ADMISSION.

In the early days of English ėducation in Bengal, in the first decades of the last century when David Hare with the help of some eminent men among his Bengalee fellow-citizens had established several schools of high and low degree in Calcutta, Ramtanu Lahiri who was afterwards called Bengal's Arnold among schoolmasters, sought admission into one of them to learn English. The Bengalees of all Indian peoples took first and most eagerly to western learning and ways. There was such a rush for (the school-society or) Mr. Hare's schools! It astonishes one to think of it now. Parents and friends of boys and youths and the boys and youths themselves besieged Mr. Hare's house in the street, now called after him "Hare street," day and night and he was followed in his palanquin from street to street and house to house at which he called by troops of them. Their one earnest prayer was—"Enter my boy at your school" or "Enter n.e at your school." A sample of the English in which the would-be pupils of his school spoke their entreaty, as they

ran alongside his palanquin, has come down to us—"Me poor boy, have pity on me ; me take in your school !" All his schools were generally full to overflowing ; so with the best wishes for them Mr. Hare was oftentimes obliged to reject the dear boys—they were all dear to the gentleman, lover of his kind, Christian or heathen, white, black or brown. At his request a sweetmeat-seller had set up his shop next his house and fed the young candidates who lingered starving at his door at his cost.

Young Ramtanu was patronised by Gour Mohan Pundit who was well-known to Mr. Hare for his scholarship and recommended by him to his favour. But Mr. Hare had no room for the boy just then and told him so, upon which the Pundit smilingly remarked to Ramtanu, "I see, my lad, you will have to stick to the *Shahib* for a time for your admission. Sit long at his gate and follow him everywhere." Ramtanu acted upon the advice. In about two months' time an unexpected vacancy on the rolls of scholars at the Colootolah branch School, afterwards called Hare School, occurring, Mr. Hare admitted him into the vacancy. It was late in the afternoon one hot day. Ramtanu had fasted till

then and his tender, sweet face looked pinched with hunger and lustreless. Mr. Hare held up his face with both his hands. "Well, what have you had to eat to-day?" asked he. "Nothing as yet, sir." Ramtanu was immediately sent over to the aforesaid sweetmeat seller's for refreshment.

Mr. Hare was a great lover of cleanliness and wanted to teach it to the boys at his school. Untidiness pained him. It was his practice sometimes to take his stand at the door of one of his schools, wet napkin in hand, and rub clean with it the faces and hands of any boys in their passing in or out who had dirtied them or smeared them with ink. The guardians of all candidates for admission into his schools, every-one of them, had to enter into an agreement with him in writing to keep their wards in clean clothes at school, if not at home. Ramtanu's guardian, his elder brother, was very poor. He hesitated for a time to sign the agreement fearing that constant supply of clean clothes might be above his means. He signed it at least, however, seeing that this condition was indispensable to admission.

Thus did Ramtanu get into his school for English education.

JASAVANTO RAO.

INDIANS in all ages have honoured the man or woman of religion, the holy and the pious far more than any other. The yellow-robed or naked *sadhu* has had greater homage from them than even the king in his purple.

Jasavanta Rao was a Maharatta of Poona who lived in the early and middle part of the last century. He lived by service under the British government, as a *mamledar* (sub-collector of revenue) on a low pay, so that he was a man of little account in the official world, far, far lower than the high-placed district officer, the divisional commissioner or the governor of Bombay. But in his private position he was a holy man, a teacher of religion and pure life. His fame as such had spread over the whole presidency and beyond, though the high officials, his masters, did not know it. And though these high officials did not know it and it has found no place in the history of the Sepoy Mutiny in India, it is a fact that he saved the British government much trouble in the western presidency by holding back the disaffected men in

that part from joining the mutineers. He did this partly by fervid appeals to their sense of right, but mostly by the silent influence of his character and the position he held in their hearts.

Once upon a time the commissioner of the Poona division touring through the country pitched his camp in a small village called Satana and stayed there for a few days. The collector of Poona was with him. Some official business required Jasavanto's attendance at the camp during the last days of the high officials' stay at the village and he was to come from the city where he worked. Somehow or other it became known to the country round that he was coming to Satana; whereupon a continuous stream of people—men, women, children—flowed into the neighbourhood of the camp until the concourse looked like a vast army of some old Maharatta conqueror. The commissioner and the magistrate were alarmed: they could not think that those people had gathered there to pay their respects to themselves, such honour had not been done to them anywhere. The magistrate anxiously inquired and soon came to know that the people were there to see their *Dev Maledar*,

as they reverently called Jasavanto Rao. *Dev* means godly. They venerated him as a saint, deemed it a merit to be able to set their eyes on him, salute his feet and hear him speak. More minute enquiries discovered to the officials the spirituality of the man and his services to his countrymen by example and precept.

The result of this unexpected discovery was a proof of the catholicity of the two Englishmen. They could admire and value character in whomever found ; and thinking that Jasavanto should be set altogether free to pursue his upward path untramelled by official cares procured him by special recommendation to government a retiring pension before he had earned it.

A PRINCE'S PRESENCE OF MIND.

RANJIT SINGH, the lion of the Punjab, was not only a great general but also a man of great presence of mind which quality saved his life in, at least, the one instance of which I shall write here. The Sikhs whom he led have been called his "Ironsides ;" the bravest among them were the Akalis who wore blue, and fought under a blue flag.

In 1809 while Sir Charles Metcalfe and colonel Ochterloney were at Amritsar negotiating a political treaty on behalf of the East India Company with Ranjit Singh, a young Akali, Fula Singh by name, rushed into the chief's presence one morning as he sat in a chamber in his palace with only, a few friends about him. Neither Ranjit nor his friends were armed while Fula had a drawn sword in his hand dyed with blood. "Raja," cried he blazing like a furnace, "the white foreigners are in the town. They are haughty and insolent. They insulted me and some of my friends. We have killed some of them, but they have killed more of us. We must be avenged ; by Govindji, we must ! If you do

not order out a body of your guard immediately to accompany us, we are none of yours henceforth ; nay, I will cleave you right down with this sword now and here and then go back and fall upon the English with what force we may gather. *Guruji ka fateh !*" Fula Singh paused and threw himself into an attitude of listening with his naked weapon held firmly in his right hand. Ranjit answered calmly, "Cut off my head, if you will, Fula Singh," and he advanced and bent his head under the young Akali's arms, "but I cannot assault the English who are my guests here without at least, inquiring into their offence, if any. I assure you, if they have been to blame, they shall pay for every drop of Sikh blood they have spilt. Possess your soul with patience for a while, dear Fula."

Ranjit's action and soft words displaying his great presence of mind turned away the hot-headed young man's wrath and averted an impending catastrophe.

THE BENGALEE FOR THE ENGLISHMAN.

FROM the very establishment of British rule in India down to quite recent times the Bengalee was closely associated with the Briton in the administration of the country in all its aspects; and he used to be appraised at his true value by men who had eyes to see or knew the facts. A special correspondent of the Daily News of London wrote in May, 1908:—"The Bengalee is the maker of New India. He has learnt our ways and grown into our system. British India without the Bengalee is inconceivable. He is ubiquitous and indispensable. An unwritten chapter in the history of modern India is the record of what has been done for the people by men of Indian races, and in that record a commanding share has fallen to the Bengalee."

The close association I have spoken of necessarily involved the Bengalee in the trials and troubles of the British in India, particularly, during the upheaval of 1857-58. His sufferings and acts of bravery and love have found no place in the records of the mutiny written by Englishmen who were too full of their own countrymen

to think of others ; but if they had, the generous British people would have no other feeling but that of comradeship for the Bengalee.

Mr. Monahan, Commissioner of the Presidency division of Bengal, speaking at a recruiting meeting at Krishnagar, Nudia, in May, 1918 said :—

"At the time of the mutiny when the stability of government was in danger, not only did Bengal stand solidly loyal, not only did local military out-breaks, when they occurred in different parts of Bengal, receive no support or countenance from the local population, who, on the contrary, co-operated heartily with the authorities in suppressing them, but wherever Bengalees were to be found in other parts of India, government was able to count on their loyalty ; and they became the object of the rebel's animosity in the same way as Europeans."

Here are thrilling stories of how a Bengalee risked his life to save that of an English officer and how another suffered for his faithful service to the British and could save himself only by his wonderful tact and boldness.

When Fatehgarh was taken by the sepoys and Nawab Tajamal Hosain, an enemy *sardar*

(chief), proclaimed himself governor of the place and also assumed rule over the country round, the handful of Europeans who were there fled for their lives. Major Robertson who had his wife and daughter with him in a boat on the Ganges down which he was fleeing was scented by the enemy who fired on the vessel and sunk it. The wife and the daughter were drowned, but the major, though wounded, swam to the Farakkabad side of the river and lay bleeding and half-dead on the sand. He remembered, however, that Babu Ishan Chandra Dev, a Bengalee, who had served under him at the Cossipore gun factory in Bengal and had afterwards accompanied him in the second British expedition against Bharatpur, lived at Furakkabad, and he sent one of his boat-men who had swam along with him to the bank with his ring for a credential to the town to look him out and to tell him of his sad plight. The man did his mission well. Ishan Babu hastened to the river bank with some food and drink and dry clothes and having given the major such relief as was immediately necessary had him carried home to his house in the darkness of the night, although he knew that the Nawab had issued a proclamation

against sheltering or giving any sort of relief to Europeans, and disobedience to the command was to be visited with forfeiture of life and property. His house had already been searched several times for European refugees and a keen eye was kept upon him, for it was known that he was a servant of the British government and he was a Bengalee ; and a Bengalee was an object of hatred to the sepoys next only to a European. Notwithstanding all this, Ishan Babu could keep the secret for a few days during which he and all his family did all they could for the officer. But a bad fever intervened and what with his wounds and fever and what with grief at the loss of his wife and child he died. The whole family mourned his death as if he were their own. Their lamentations attracted the attention of the Nawab's men. Strict inquiries were made and the fact was soon known to the Nawab. His judgment was quick. Ishan Babu's house was looted, he was manacled, and brought before him and was ordered to be blown from the mouth of a cannon ! He was saved only by the most earnest intercession of his nephew (brother's son), Sreebatsa Dev, who, luckily for him, had been in some past time private tutor to the Nawab and was an object of great veneration to him.

A FAITHFUL BENGALEE'S SUFFERINGS.

BABU Kali Charan Chatterji was in charge of the British treasury at Lucknow when the storm broke out. As he was at work one afternoon in the treasury buildings, the chief commissioner, Sir Henry Lawrence, accompanied by a high military officer came in unannounced and told him that he had reasons to believe that the sepoys of the guard at the treasury and the other sepoys were on the eve of rising and that one of the first measures of precaution to be taken was to replace the sepoy with a British guard at the treasury and remove the treasure-chests as soon after as possible into the fort. Kali Babu respectfully opposed the first part of the proposal saying that the change of guard would precipitate matters. "Let the treasure be removed by all means, but let us not yet show that we distrust the sepoys." His advice was taken and 5 lakhs of rupees were removed under cover of darkness in the night. But the subsequent event proved that Kali Babu was unwise in advising the removal without replacing the guard and Sir Henry was unwise in listening to him. Soon after the escort of 50 British soldiers had left the treasury

with the bags of silver on the shoulders of their men, the havildar of the sepoy guard with two sepoys strode into the office room while Kali Babu was still poring over certain accounts and holding the muzzle of his gun at his head, as he looked up, cried, "Why did you have those bags of money carried away from here? You are a dead man, you *Feringhee's* (European's) slave!" But before he could pull the trigger, Kali Babu said with the most perfect self-possession, "Do not mind the bags mostly of copper and some of silver which have been taken away, havildar shahib, to pay the soldiers at the fort with. The strong room there is nearly as full as ever of gold and silver. Come in and see." It was rather strange, but it was so, that at these words the havildar lowered his weapon and walked into the adjoining strong room the door of which stood ajar with his two followers. Kali Babu had not thought of it, but as he saw the three men walk before him into the room, it flashed into his mind that his opportunity was come. Quick as thought he closed the door upon them and locked it. The next instant he securely barred the door of his own office-room. He spent the whole night in it. The next morning the city was in an

uproar. The sepoys threw off their mask and attacked the treasury and the fort. They were, however, severely handled by Sir Henry Lawrence and dispersed. This is a well-known matter of history.

Kali Babu had effected his escape from his office-room and gone home to his family-dwelling at Ranikatra. His house was attacked by the mutineers and looted.He could escape with the ladies of his family and children and a younger brother with great difficulty, but he lost his all. Every Bengalee at Lucknow and, for the matter of that, in Oudh was now hated by the sepoys with whom were a great part of the civil population next to the European and a price of Rs. 25 was set on the head of each. But the price on Kali Babu's head was proclaimed to be Rs. 5,000, for he was the man who had baulked the sepoys of the rich loot of the treasury. Henceforth Kali Babu lived the life of a hunted animal for over a year. His wife and a sister-in-law and the children, however, found a secret shelter in the house of an old friend of his, Govindas Avasti, who lived in a village some miles from Lucknow and was a powerful man. He was separated from them as well as from his brother,

Tarinicharan, who succeeded in escaping to Kamaun in the disguise of a mendicant. Kali Babu too was obliged to assume several false garbs, but so very vigilant were the eyes that looked for him and eager the search that was made after him that he could not leave Oudh. He lived for a few weeks under the guise of a priest in a temple in a large garden far afield in the country. But a man in the neighbourhood, a Hindu, somehow or other discovered him to be the Bengalee whose head was worth Rs. 5,000. He engaged an Uzbek ruffian to murder him. Luckily for Kali Babu he had an inkling of the design in time enough to form his own resolution. In the dusk of the evening he went straight to the house of the Hindu in his priestly garb and accosted him where he sat inside the house with his mother and his wife. Kali Babu said, "Brother Hindu, I am Babu Kalicharan, a Brahman, whom you have engaged a professional assassin to kill for the Rs. 5,000 which has been set on my head. Why don't you murder me yourself ? You are a Chatri and I a Brahman, your superior in caste. Although your sin shall be black enough to condemn you to eternal hell-fire for murdering a Brahman, yet shall it

not be blacker by your letting the unclean hand of a *mlechcha* shed a holy Brahman's blood ? Why not kill me yourself ? I ask again. I shall, in that case, an unhappy forlorn being that I am, have, at least, the satisfaction of dying by a brother Hindu's hand."

The speech had the desired effect. The man shook in every limb, the women sobbed as they understood the whole matter. Kali Babu not only saved himself by his boldness and his cleverly conceived speech, but also made the Chatri and his family his friends who afterwards helped him in various ways. It was they and two faithful servants of his who gave him comparative safety and peace in the early months of 1858, by sedulously publishing that he was dead.

Lucknow was taken a second time by General Outram in March 1858. With that the mutiny in the city was suppressed, although Oudh was not fully quieted. Kali Babu came out of his hiding, put off his disguise and called on captain Martin ,his immediate superior before the mutiny and who had lived through it. The captain was agreeably surprised, for he had heard of his death. He received him very kindly and immediately appointed him to the charge of the

treasury at Cawnpore and paid him his arrear salary for the months of the mutiny. Kali Babu, always glad to serve his government, started for Cawnpore although after his long sufferings he would have rested for a while. His adventures were not yet ended. On his way to Cawnpore he fell in with a body of British troops who, it seemed to him, were, for want of better employment, amusing themselves with seizing any Indians who came in their way and hanging them with their turbans or scarfs from the branches of the nearest trees or shooting them. Kali Babu was caught, dragged to a pole which stood before a tent and tied to it ; and a Tommy was going to aim at him with his rifle before he could make himself heard. "I am captain Martin's subordinate, Babu Kalicharan Chatterji, a Bengalee, going to take charge of the British treasury at Cawnpore. Will you shoot me ? cried out he boldly and distinctly in excellent English. He was at once untied and some of the officers who were about laughed aloud, as if it were a huge joke, patted him on the back and pressed on him biscuits and rum. They might spare their good victuals ; only let the inoffensive way-farer alone.

A MAN OF SELF-RESPECT.

It was one of the ways of Moslem royalty not to allow a subject, unless he enjoyed exemption by its special command, to approach it and wait on it with shoes on. Similar prohibition was laid on the use of the umbrella in its presence and on riding on an elephant in the streets of the capital. It will not easily gain credence in these democratic days that up to recent years there were Englishmen in India who seemed to think that as successors to the Mahomedans in the sovereignty of the country they were entitled to the same marks of respect as the Badshas and Nawabs had exacted. One such man was General Mason, Brigadier-in-charge at Ghazipur in 1853. He would not admit any Indian, whatever his rank, with shoes on into his presence. But he was snubbed by a Bengalee doctor and was, I trust, ever afterwards careful.

On his return to India after the termination of the second Burmese war in 1852 surgeon Surya Kumar Sarvadhicary was appointed to the charge of the government hospital at Ghazipur. While there, he was one day called upon to

see the general at his quarters upon some business in which the general was interested. The surgeon presented himself at the officer's door at the appointed hour and sent in his card. The bearer, who, a few minutes afterwards, came to usher him into his master's presence, asked him to leave off his boots at the door of the room, whereupon Surya Kumar said loudly enough to be heard by the general who could be seen through the partially open door, "Tell your master I am not apt to submit to such indignity. He may write to me and I shall be happy to write back." With this he walked off.

Here was a man of self-respect ; and that his conduct in this abortive interview with General Mason raised him in the estimation of the European officers of the town was evidenced by the event which forms the subject of the next story.

A CASE OF SUDDEN POPULARITY.

THE British soldiers under the command of General Neil evidenced an unreasonable aversion to being treated by Indian doctors although the general himself entertained no such feelings. On the contrary, he had admiration for the skill and courtesy of surgeon Sarbadhicary. It so happened that the general had a boil in his left hand. He resolved to avail himself of this opportunity to remove the prejudice of his men against Indian doctors; and, accordingly, while they were on parade, he summoned Sarbadhicary to attend him and when he came, begged him to operate on his boil. The Bengalee looked at it for a second, saw that it was ripe for the knife, performed the operation deftly and quickly, and bandaged the hand up as neatly as any could wish. General Neil said that he felt much relieved and thanked the surgeon before all his men. The British soldier of the rank and file is the funniest creature under the sun. His prejudices and favours are equally sudden and unaccountable. When the men saw the Bengalee surgeon operate upon the hand of their

general at his own request and heard him praise him and thank him, they cried, "Hurrah for the Bengalee surgeon !" and seized him and bore him out of the ground on their shoulders !

THE UNDAUNTED.

I SHALL write two more stories about this Dr. Sarbadhicary of whom Sir Stuart Bailey, a Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, afterwards spoke in these terms. "Who would have thought that these mild appearances covered the spirit of an ardent mutiny veteran who was present at many bloody actions not, indeed, to add to human miseries, but to relieve them so far as science, skill and devotion could ?"

The commissariat stores at Lucknow were looted by the sepoys so copletely that not a bottle of wine nor a tin of biscuit was left for the men or officers to refresh themselves with. The men were mad for their drink and would not be controlled, whereupon it was determined that all the wines in the medical stores should be transferred to the commissariat. General Havelock sent an adjutant to Dr. Sarvadhicari with the word that the transfer should be immediately carried out. But Sarbadhicari told the adjutant that he wanted written orders from the general to yield any part of his stores for a purpose for which they were not intended. The adjutant

returned to his commander with this answer highly annoyed. Havelok was more,—he was ablaze with anger when he heard the answer. Sword in hand, he marched out "double quick" and meeting Sarbadhicari among his patients and without even nodding in return for his salute cried, "Doctor of the military hospital, you have disobeyed the orders of your commanding officer. You know what is to be your punishment?" "I know, general, it is death." "Well then, you are to be court-martialled here and now." With that he took a chair and bade his adjutant state the charge. The adjutant said, "General, I told the doctor some time ago from you and in your name to make over the wines in the medical stores to the commissariat and he answered that he would not do so without your written orders in which he disobeyed you." "What have you to say on your behalf?" demanded the general, his eyes flashing fire, of the Bengalee doctor. "To say nothing, but only to read a paper which I happen to have in my pocket" quickly replied the doctor, and taking the paper out read as follows :—

"Without written orders from the commanding officer nothing shall be diverted to other pur-

poses from the medical stores."—H. Havelock, General, Commanding officer.

Then putting the paper in the general's hands he observed with a gentle smile, "I thought, general, that by not delivering the wines I only obeyed your orders, as I was duty bound to."

Havelock read the paper, saw the gentle smile about the doctor's lips, heard his observation and burst out into a loud guffaw. The court-martial thus ended happily.

A MIDNIGHT COURT BY THE WAY-SIDE.

THERE was for sometime a reign of terror in the areas covered by the Mutiny immediately after its suppression and before "Clemency Canning" could proclaim a general amnesty. It was when military officers of lower ranks drunk with the strong wine of hard-bought triumph over the inhuman enemy and realising more fully after the event how terrible the crisis had been and burning with savage vengeance were employed in the capacities of the detective police and judges to try—God save the mark!—the remnants of the mutineers and the disaffected. They pounced upon any Indians they could, sat anywhere in judgment over them and shot or hanged them upon any trees that were at hand.

A body of British troops under a captain were on their way from Lucknow to Allahabad. At 1 o'clock in the night they descried on some village path a party of men marching in procession to the music of tomtoms, cymbals and horns and lighted by torches. Some of the people were on horseback, some were armed with swords. It was a bridal procession. But the captain and

his men thought it was a body of mutineers. So it was seized upon and driven at the point of the bayonet to where the captain sat in his saddle. The saddle forthwith turned into a judgment seat and the spot into a court. The whole party unheard and undefended were condemned to the branches of the trees which lined the road.

Fortunately for them Dr. Sarbadhicary was with the British troops. He immediately made his way to the captain's presence and said, "Captain, these men are no men of war nor rebels. They are peaceful country people and, I see, a bridal party. Why do you kill them?" The soldiers almost drowned his voice crying out loudly, "Never mind—hang them—hang the bloody dogs, one and all!" But the doctor was not to be stopped that way. He, being an Indian, knew well the customs of the country and pointed to the captain certain signs by which a bridal party might be known. And then while the officer was still hesitating, he made his last impassioned appeal in these words,—"I am of the country and the people; I know them and their customs and I tell you that these men here brought before you are not engaged in rebellion

or any other sinister purpose. They are going to celebrate a wedding. The bridegroom is with them decked out for the occasion. Here is a litter for the bride and presents for her are in it ; the priests are in the party. The bridegroom and the best men are on horseback and armed with swords—rusty old swords ! You see that is the custom among the Chatris. They are going to win the bride, of course, make believe to win her in fair fight against the bride's people. I tell you, captain, it is a peaceful bridal party and no mutineers. They should not be stopped nor molested. If you hang them, you will be guilty of murder." The captain was convinced. The men were released immediately.

Half an hour after the captain summoned the doctor under the shadow of a tree apart from where his men were. He was on his knees, praying. As soon as he saw Sarbadhicari, he cried out in tones of sincere remorse and earnest entreaty :—"Doctor, do you pray ? can you pray ? have you any objections to praying with me ?"

Sarbadhicari has left it on record that never prayer was more true and passionate in church or chapel than what was poured forth by the captain that night under the tree.

THE STEPS LEADING TO BEING A BEAST.

THE great Ram mohan Roy, scholar, reformer and founder of the theistic church (the Brahmo Samaj) of India was strongly opposed to any scheme of education from which spiritual teaching and exercise were excluded. A gentleman once told him of a teacher of the newly established Hindu college in Calcutta that he had begun the world as a deist, then he had turned a polytheist and he was now an atheist; upon which Ram mohan remarked that the teacher's next step was to be a beast and that he should be at once removed from the college.

A FOUR-YEAR-OLD HERO.

A WONDERFUL instance of juvenile love and heroism is furnished by the short story I tell here.

There was a fire in the small village of Taralahi, a few miles from Durbhanga in Behar, in day time on the 9th April, 1918. A poor man's hut was ablaze. The man and his wife were both away from home ; only a two-year-old baby lay sleeping in the cradle inside the hut and his four-year-old brother was playing on the dusty village path at some distance. This child threw away his playthings and ran home. He saw from the small yard through the open door that his baby-brother was in the cradle crying and perceived his imminent peril. He lost not a moment. Impelled by a love stronger than anything he could think of, he tripped in to the side of the cradle and pulled the baby down. Then, unable to take it up in his arms—it was too heavy for him—he dragged it out to the yard by its legs, while tongues of fire were shooting overhead and about him and the thin walls of bamboo twigs thinly plastered over with clay were collapsing.

The baby was rescued, but his brother suffered from large burns which necessitated his removal to the Government hospital at Durbhanga.

WONDERFUL SELF-CONTROL.

It was in the village of Sakrail in the Mymensingh district of Bengal. The wedding of a daughter of the family was being solemnised in the house. The bridegroom and the bride's parties were assembled in the gaily decorated court-yard which and the whole house were ablaze with lights; the bands were discoursing music and all the people—man, woman and child—were in high glee. A son of the master of the house, the late Babu Bhairab Nath Sen, was subject to fits of apoplexy which came upon him at irregular intervals with more or less virulence. In that night of festivity there was an attack upon the poor young man, Govinda by name, in his room: and the father who lived in a state of almost perpetual alarm on account of his disease was immediately at his bed-side. Nobody in the court-yard and very few in the house knew of this sudden affliction. So, the wedding ceremony proceeded merrily—the bands played on, the men bustled about, talked and laughed, and the women decked in their silks and jewellery cried their shrill cries of *ululu*, supposed to be

auspicious. Incense burnt before the presiding god of the ceremony and the priests uttered the *mantras* (hymns and prayers) appropriate to the occasion. The nuptial knot was not yet tied when the young sufferer, inspite of the ministrations of the doctors who had been hastily summoned to his bed-side, died in his room in the house not twenty yards from the scene of the joyous celebration. What a contrast was here between joy and grief within hail of each other!

Now, if the fact of the death were known outside the chamber of death, the marriage ceremony should have to be immediately stopped; for the bride should be in mourning by custom and her body rendered impure and in that state she could not be given away in marriage. The unfinished rites should have to be put off and there was no knowing if they might be finished at all in some future time. Besides, an interruption of the ceremony would, by current belief, bring forth evil not only to the bridegroom and the bride, but also to their respective fathers' families and its stoppage would be a sore disappointment to all. So, the bereaved father determined in his mind that none but the immediate attendants at the death-bed should

know of the death before the completion of the rites. Anxious inquirers knocked at the doors every minute or two to all of whom he calmly answered, while his heart was breaking, "Nothing to worry about here ; but hurry on the ceremony." And it was hurried on ; the knot was tied in due time and the finishing rites were performed. Then only, when the news of this was carried to the old gentleman,--then only he suffered himself to give vent to his pent-up agony : "Govinda is gone ! my beloved is gone ! I am left desolate in my old age !" There was mourning in the house now, where there was rejoicing, and loud lamentations of women pierced the night air which only a few minutes before had rung with their tones of glee like those of silver bells ; the drums, tomtoms, cymbals, and *shanais* (flutes) were silent and the lights put out. All this was as might be expected ; but what exceeded all expectations was the almost superhuman self-control of Bhairab Babu, the father, who could keep his great grief down until a good purpose which had to be accomplished had been accomplished.

A MIRACULOUS CONVERSION.

BILWAMANGAL Tagore was born on the banks of the Krishna in Southern India. His memory is now venerated as that of one of the holy men of India. But his early youth gave little promise of his saintly after years. The way in which the great change was wrought makes an impressive story.

He loved a girl passionately. She lived across the Krishna so that he had to be ferried over to her house every time he wished to see her. Earth and sky were dark one night and a violent storm of rain and wind made it almost impossible for any living being to venture out. But far more violent was the passion that night in Bilwamangal's heart to be at his lady's side. He picked his way to the river bank. There was neither boat nor man to take him across. He did not mind. He threw himself into the seething waves. He found something in the water floating along ; he rode on it and somehow or other touched land on the other side. He was happy ; he stumbled along the bank into the village,—to the gate of his love's house. Alas ! the gate was bolted from within. He resolved

to scale the wall. Groping about for something to hold to clamber up he grasped what seemed to him to be a thick rope. It held his weight well. He was soon on the top of the wall. He jumped down, ran to the door of his mistress's room, knocked and was admitted. What a sight did he present to her! Dripping moisture from his hair and clothes, smelling of rotten skin and flesh, pieces of which stuck to several parts of his body, wounded and scratched by his stumblings and knockings against many hard things in his mad career he made a sight which nearly took her breath away, though she loved him. "My darling," said Bilwamangal, "you hung a rope for me over the wall?" "No, I did not" said she, "but how did you cross the river? You swam?" "I did" answered the young lover, "and fortunately, I found in the water what, I think, was the trunk of a plantain tree which supported me well." "It was a corpse, I suspect;" said the girl with a shudder, "look and see rotten skin and flesh sticking to your body, and you smell foul, and you have been knocking yourself against trees and walls." "Yes, and all for you—my life, my soul." "Now let us go and see what rope you hung by to get upon the wall; the storm

has ceased now." They went out and saw to their horror that it was a snake. It still lay suspended on the wall with its head in a hole in it—but killed by the strain that had been put on it. Returning to her room she had her lover carefully washed and dried and clothed in warm clothes. Then looking him straight in his handsome face and with her own eyes streaming with tears she said, "My love, I am body and soul yours in return for the great love, you have shown to-night, you bear me. But what am I, Bilwamangal ? A painted lump of clay. What am I worth ? and what is my love worth ? Alas ! man, if you but loved your God with half the devotion you love me with, what might you not gain ?" Her voice spoke these words in his ears like a voice from heaven and completely penetrated his soul. The great tide of love which swelled in him at once forsook its low, muddy, channel, and flowed bright and limpid into a far higher one. Bilwamangal was thenceforth a holy man. He lived to a ripe old age—a true lover, for he loved his God. Nor did he hate his own kind, for, in his hermitage on the Krishna the time that he could spare from his devotions he consecrated to ministering to benighted souls.

SHEIKH MAHAMMAD ASUR.

MIR Kashem Ali Khan, once sovereign of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, the patriot who had risked his all to rescue his country and Moslem power in India from the grip of the English merchants, the victors of Plassey and the king-makers of his territorites, sat not long after his fruitless attempt to capture Patna at the door of his tent in the yellow rags of a *fakeer*. Driven from his throne and country, a refugee in the camp of his faithless ally, the Nawab of Oudh, he had been cruelly insulted by the latter and he had assumed the rags to shame the Nawab to some feeling for him. The Nawab was shamed for a while. He came personally, begged his protege to get into his proper clothes and tried to soothe him with sweet but hollow words. Mir Kashem had yet a band of highly trained soldiers under Samru in his service and yet some gold and jewels in his chests. But the troop soon deserted him and went over to the Nawab. Mir Kashem was now in an absolutely defenceless condition and at the complete mercy of the rapacious Nawab who coveted the poor remnants of his

former wealth and was his bitterest enemy in spite of professions of sympathy and readiness to help him to the utmost of his power. What the Nawab actually did was to set Samru's men to plunder his camp. One's blood boils to think of the atrocities of these ruffians. They seized Mir Kashem and dragged him in chains to the Nawab's quarters and then robbed him, their former master, not only of all that was in his treasure-chests but also of all his valuable articles of furniture and domestic use. They even assaulted the ladies of his family for the jewellery on their persons. God raised them a champion in this emergency. He was Sheikh Muhammad Asur, a personal servant of Mir Kashem. He defended them single-handed against odds and at last succeeded in getting them out of the camp and to fly. Then he joined them in their place of hiding and escorted them in their long wanderings for shelter and safety. He found for them an asylum, at last, in a village in Rohilkhand and having sufficiently provided for their protection there, returned to Buxar for his master. That master had been released from imprisonment in the Nawab's camp on the eve of the latter's battle with the English. He was dis-

covered by the faithful Asur some miles from the battle-field on a lame, sorry elephant fleeing he knew not whither. He was ill in body and mind, penniless, broken-hearted—the once great monarch of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Asur took him down from the animal and leaving the high roads guided him through forests and village-paths. A weary journey it was, for it was a journey to exile, to cheerless life and obscure death. It ended, however, in its time. Mir Kashem lived in the Rohilkhand village a few years—a listless, self-forgetful life, caring for nothing and hoping for nothing. His servant, Asur, was his devoted friend, guardian and supporter. As long as he lived, he kept him in the village and never relaxed his care for him. He died before his master.

History or biography has not recorded many instances of such devoted service.

KINGLY COURTESY.

THE private life of Nasiruddin Mahmud, Sultan of Delhi, was that of a *dervish*. It is not possible to quote from the annals of the world's royalty instances of such austerities as were habitually practised by him. He defrayed all his personal expenses which were notoriously small by copying books. His queen had to cook his meal for him. When one day this very house-wifely queen burnt her fingers in baking her husband's bread and begged him to give her a maid to assist her, the king advised her to be more patient and assured her that she would be rewarded for her pains in the next world.

But this story is written not to hold up his parsimony as a model of conduct, but his temper and courtesy of which this is recorded :—

On showing one of the books he had transcribed to a nobleman of his court, the latter pointed out several mistakes which the king immediately and with seeming thankfulness corrected. When the critic was gone, the people about him saw him erase the corrections and restore the old reading. They asked him the reason

and he said in answer, "I knew all the while that the copy was right, but thought it better to make the corrections than to hurt the feelings of a well-intentioned adviser." Punctuality is said to be the courtesy of kings. We see here that their courtesy can be more than mere regard for appointed time.

THE PAPER-BRIDES.

In a country where every man and woman consider their life wasted if they cannot marry, where they do not allow any consideration—of pursuit of letters or science, of politics or the arts, of one's country or community's good, of wealth or fame—any consideration whatever save and except that of spiritual uplift, to interfere with their entrance into wedlock—in such a country the attitude of the late Ananda Ram Barua of Assam towards matrimony might appear singular. He was a member of the Indian Civil Service, a barrister-at-law and a deep scholar. He knew much Latin and more French; and Sanskrit was his *forte*. He was a voracious reader and a voluminous writer. His library was worth a princess's dowry. He was for long pressed by relatives and friends to marry and live the orthodox Hindu householder's life ; but he always resisted their importunities. Once in reply to a friend who asked why he preferred to live single he said, "I do not live single at all, my dear. I count more brides than a thousand nawabs could in their harems. Come and look

at them." And he took him to his library and showed him his numerous volumes of books in the glass-cases which lined the walls.

A WARLIKE BENGALEE.

No longer can it be said that the Bengalees are unwarlike. Over a century and-a-half of exclusion from the profession of arms almost emasculated them, although instances of skill and courage of individual men in war such as those of the late Col. Suresh Biswas of Nudia, Bengal, who distinguished himself in the Brazalian army might be cited. In the late world-war the French government first tested the mettle of the Bengalee. A band of young Bengalees of their territory of Chandernagore were trained and sent off to the western front to fight alongside the French soldiers. They fought and fought very well. One of them lost an arm in the defence of Verdun. When it was proposed to invalidate him home to Bengal, he said, "Why so ? I have still another arm and can go on fighting. If I lose even this one, I shall pull the trigger with my teeth to fire at the Hun. I will not give up fighting nor go home." A man is generally more or less a type of his nation. This Bengalee was not certainly unwarlike. Could the people of his nation be hopeless poltroons ?

LOVE IN HUMBLE LIFE.

GURUCHARAN of Sakrail was of the lowest caste among the Hindus ; but he had a heart for his wife which a man of the highest among them might envy. He was an old man with neither chick nor child nor kith and kin to stand round his bed wherein he lay dying. "Wife," said he painfully, "I feel as I never felt before ; I'm, I fear, dying." The poor wife held his cold hand tighter in her grasp and sobbed aloud. Gurucharan said again more painfully than before, "Dear wife, I shall be soon dying ; the sight of the struggle of death shall terrify you without anybody to uphold you." Then, after a while,—"My friend, Jamini, the washerman, is at home. Go, and tell him and fetch him. He will sit with you through the trial, my poor wife."

The man was fetched. Gurucharan breathed his last not many hours afterwards.

NATURE STRONGER THAN CONVENTION.

SULTAN Bulban's son was Bakarra Khan, and Bakarra Khan's son was Keikobad. Sultan Bulban was sultan or king of Delhi and Bokarra Khan was governor of the province of Bengal under him. It so happened that at his eighty-sixth year king Bulban was taken seriously ill and he summoned his son and grandson to his bedside. They both came and waited on the old man. After a few days, however, Bulban finding his father in less imminent danger than he had feared and for some other reasons not known to history or tradition left for his seat of government and, as his ill luck would have it, without his father's permission. This enraged the old monarch grown petulant by illness, who set him aside and nominated his grandson, Keikobad, king after him and breathed his last within a few days of this arbitrary nomination.

So the son was king and the father only a viceroy under him. Bakarra had acquiesced in the arrangement, for he was a loving father and thought more of his son than of himself. But that son, only eighteen years old at his accession,

trod an altogether different path to what his father or any other of his well-wishers would choose for him. He gave way without restraint to the pleasures natural to his age in company with a number of his nobles, chief among whom was his Vazir (minister), Naziruddin. Vice prevailed in the court to such an extent that every street of Delhi, it is said, rang with riot ; magistrates were seen drunk in public and lewd songs were heard on every side. The profligate's father in Bengal, gave him repeated warnings and, these failing, marched at the head of an army to meet him, not to fight, but to bring him to reason by gentle persuasion. The wicked minister easily inflamed the king against his father and prevailed on him to march out in grand array of battle to oppose him. The two armies met on the banks of the Gogra. There was, happily, no fighting. Bokarra Khan appealed so strongly to his son's affections and filial duties that the minister could not prevent an interview. He endeavoured, however, to frustrate the effects of it by imposing many humiliating ceremonies on the father who was, by his office, but a vassal to all which that father patiently submitted. But when after repeated obeisances

he found the king remaining unmoved on his throne, he was so shocked by his unnatural behaviour that he burst into tears. The sight of this overpowered all the young reprobate's resolutions—he was not altogether devoid of grace. He leaped down from his throne and ran to throw himself at his father's feet; and Bakarra hastening to embrace him, he fell on his neck, and they remained for some minutes weeping in each other's arms. When the first transport was over, Keikobad seated his father on the throne and showed him every mark of love and reverence. Was it not thus seen that nature is stronger than convention?

CHANDA THE TRUE.

RANAMALLA, the ràǹà or raja of Marwar sent a special ambassador with a cocoanut and letters to his brother ràǹà of Mewar, Laksha, offering the hand of his daughter to prince Chanda, heir-apparent to the throne of the last-named country. The cocoanut was inevitable as token of an offer of marriage. Ràǹà Laksha received the ambassador in open court and very pleased at the offer chose to be facetious. He had a vein of humour which his sixty years and cares of state had not dried up. So, with his hand twirling the ends of his partially grey moustache, and ogling the ambassador with half an eye he said, "Ambassador, no body will ever again come with a cocoanut for old Laksha ; his days are past!" The sally was followed by laughter in all notes of the gamut ; and it had not subsided when Chanda who had been sent for entered the hall. He inquired into and heard the cause of the mirth and though he had asked with a pleasant smile on his lips, he grew grave when he heard. He took it into his head and believed that his father had a real desire

behind his joke ; that he would gladly marry the princess of Marwar himself if the offer had come for him. He grew graver as the belief took root in his mind, and standing before the whole assembly he said that he preferred to live single, but that he would welcome the princess as his step-mother. The court was thunder-struck and the ràǹà bewildered. Recovering himself he remonstrated with his son, begged him and, request failing, commanded him to accept the offer for himself. Chanda was not to be shaken from his resolve. Then Laksha waxed angry and said, "Chanda, if you will be obstinate, I shall marry the girl myself, if her father will let me, and on this condition that her son shall succeed me on the throne to your exclusion." Chanda firmly replied, "Be it so."

The father married the princess and in course of time a son was born to him who was named Mukulji. When this prince was only five years old, ràǹà Laksha was called upon to go to war in defence of the sacred city of Gaya in Behar. On the eve of his departure the ràǹà summoned Chanda to an audience in full durbar and addressing him said, "Chanda, a man settles the affairs of his household before he goes to war, for there

is no knowing whether or no he may return from it alive." Then, as if he did not remember the agreement which Chanda had entered into with him about succession to his throne, he asked, "What will be Mukulji's portion in the state at my death ?" Chanda replied in a gentle but firm tone, "The whole state is Mukulji's, father. Have you forgot ?" Whole Rajputana admired Chanda's self-abnegation and regard for pledged word. He also proposed that Mukulji should be formally installed as heir-apparent before the rànà left for Gaya and had his proposal carried out. In return for his self-sacrifice he was appointed regent of the state and his step-brother's guardian during his minority and it was definitely settled that he should be his chief minister when he should attain man's state and reign. It was also ruled that all important documents issued by the state should bear Chand's heraldic mark, a spear-head, at the top.

Rànà Laksha was killed in the battle. His death made no difference to the state, for it was ruled equally well by Chanda on behalf of his ward. But difficulties arose with the young widowed *ranee's* (queen's) becoming jealous of Chanda's influence and power in the state and

of the praise which men bestowed on his wisdom and skill in administration and, most of all, on his self-sacrifice. He was their idol. The dowager had assented to the regency of her step-son, but had not bargained for such popularity as he won throwing herself and her son entirely into the shade. So she sulked, found fault with everything that Chanda did, grew malicious and sowed his path with thorns. She ended by inviting her father and brothers to overthrow the powerful regent in the interest of her minor son, as she said. They came readily. Intriguing was now fast and furious in the palace until Chanda, disgusted with the conduct of the party, laid down his office and arranged to retire into private life in a neighbouring state. Before leaving he embraced his little brother and blessed him and spoke in these words to the dowager :—

"Mother, I go. I hope I leave the state and the traditions of our ancient house in better and abler hands. If, however, they should be imperilled by any accidents, you have only to send for me and I shall stand by dear Mukulji and yourself while a drop of living blood courses in my veins."

Then those who had come to overthrow

Chanda, having effected their purpose, usurped all powers for the time being. Nay more ; they studied to keep them for all time. They soon threw the affairs of Mewar into a state of chaos and strove to create an impression that the officious and inefficient dowager and her hot-headed unruly boy were responsible for all the evils. The grandfather designed to remove the grandson from his path by secret murder—lust of kingdom could in those days drag men to such depths of crime ! An old maid-servant of the palace, however, who had somehow or other got scent of the design warned the mother and the child.

Now were the mother's eyes opened. In her alarm and distress she remembered the much-wronged Chanda's generous promise of help to her and secretly sent a messenger to him telling him all through the man, penitently and humbly begging for his forgiveness and conjuring him to hasten to his beloved Mukulji's side to save him and the state and his father's house of hoary fame. Chanda readily obeyed the summons. He came at the head of a troop of sturdy Rajputs, fought a bloody battle before the gates of the capital in which the wicked grandfather and

some of his sons were killed and soon purged the state of the remaining usurpers and their retainers.

I am not sure if a parallel can be found of Chanda's character, so unselfish, generous and true in the history of princes. India has always gloried in it.

THE LOYAL RAJPUTS.

RAJA Jasovanta Singh of Jodhpur, one of the ablest of Auranzebe's generals, died at Kabul whereupon his widow with her two infant sons started for home escorted by her late husband's Rajput soldiers under Durgadas, one of his faithful lieutenants. In her grief and hurry she omitted the formality of obtaining the emperor's permission to return for which fault of omission she, even she, a princess in rank and wife of such a valued servant, that was, of the state, was stopped by his orders on the banks of the Indus and a body of imperial soldiers would not allow her to get over. Auranzebe was no respector of persons and a great stickler for form. Durgadas, however, discovered an unguarded ford, and the party crossed the river without accident or loss. It hurried on and in a short time reached the environs of Delhi. The object of the widowed *ranee* (raja's wife) was to explain matters to the emperor in an interview and beg his pardon for her returning without formal permission. But the emperor was very angry; perhaps, he had a sinister

design ;—he was such an inscrutable person, nobody exactly knew his purpose. He would not see her representative, Durgadas, nor let her enter the capital, but surrounded her encampment with his troops. This exasperated her, her Durgadas and her brave Rajputs. The men determined to rescue their mistress and the heirs to Jodhpur at any cost. But they did not act rashly. They united considerable cunning to their accustomed bravery. Durgadas, the leader, obtained by humble petition leave to send off part of the escort to Jodhpur with their wives and children. With this party the *ranee* and her two infants went in disguise, while a servant-woman and two children of the princes' ages remained in the camp to personate them. But many hours had not elapsed before the suspicions of the emperor were aroused and he sent orders that the widow and her children should be brought into the citadel. Durgadas wanted time—time enough for the fugitives to cover the distance between Delhi and the state of Jodhpur. So he offered an obstinate resistance. The troops which surrounded the camp were attacked and cut to pieces. More troops were sent from the city ; the gallant Rajputs fought them with

reckless valour ; but they were at length overpowered by numbers. The false *ranee* and children were seized and carried off to Delhi. Durgadas had by this time effected his purpose ; he knew from messengers who had just arrived in camp that the *ranee* and the princes were safe in Jodhpur. So by his order his party, now reduced to a mere handful of men, broke and fled. The imperial troops did not pursue them.

This is a story of the loyalty and bravery of the Rajputs than whom a more chivalrous people have not lived in India.

MOHENDRA NATH BANERJI.

Of Babu Mahendra Nath Banerji of Baraset in the district of 24-Parganas it is said that he began the world as an under-writer on the extremely low pay of Rs. 20 a month in the commissariat of the armies under Lord Roberts here is India. By his industry and honesty he rose rapidly in service until he was the chief Indian officer in his department and was the god worshipped by the world of commissariat contractors for patronage. While the last expedition into Afghanisthan was being hastily got up in July 1880, a wealthy contractor of provision offered him a large bribe—it would have made his fortune once for all, if accepted—for a big contract. He looked up and smiled sweetly at the man. "My dear sir," said he, "when I was very poor on the almost starvation wages of Rs. 20 a month, I managed to keep body and soul together. I earn a very comfortable salary now. I want for nothing that I cannot supply. Fortune, who has favoured me so far, shall surely set her face against me if I offend her by receiving illegal gratifications." With this he bowed the man out.

It is further said of this exemplary man that on the eve of his retirement from service Lord Roberts who had a personal regard for him pressed a cheque for a few thousand rupees into his hands as a bonus in addition to the pension he had earned. Mahendra Babu could not refuse it for fear of displeasing the commander-in-chief. He accepted it with gratitude ; but as soon as he had left his presence, he tore it to pieces. He was sure no bonus was due to him for simply doing his duties.

THE DOCTOR WHO PRESCRIBED A CART-LOAD OF STRAW.

THE law of heredity is a great law. There are families of geniuses or good people as there are of dullards or reprobates in which the blood seems to have risen superior to all adventitious circumstances acting upon the mind or character and to have had its own way.

A family of good people was that to which the Lahiris of Krishnagar belonged. In the middle of the last century they were eight brothers and two sisters. They were all good, very good ; lovers of God and their fellow men. The saintly educationist, Ramtanu, was the seventh child of his parents ; Kalicharan was the last. I have to speak of Kalicharan in the present story. He was intended for the medical profession and was, accordingly, educated at the Medical College, Calcutta. Never was doctor more sought for, more honoured, more loved than Dr. Lahiri, for not only was he extremely well skilled in the healing art and always very attentive to his patients, but also very generous and charitable. If the patient was too poor to pay his fees or the price of the medicines he

prescribed, (his prescriptions were served at his own dispensary) he cheerfully went without either or both ; and, what was more, when he thought it was necessary, he laid himself out to supply at his own expense the other needs of his patients not in the line of drugs or attendance. Once upon a time he was called upon to see a very poor person. Arriving at his hut he examined him and prescribed for him, of course, without any thought of fees or the price of the medicine finding their way into his pocket and wrote at the end of the recipe "a cartload of straw" over his signature. The compounders at his dispensary were at their wit's end to make out what he meant by this last and were not any the wiser before he returned home and explained that he wanted them to have a cartload of straw bought at the bazar and send it for his patient's hut which badly wanted to be rethatched almost all over. "For," said he, "if it was not, the cold wind making its way freely through the ill-conditioned roof would keep his patient cold in his bed and physicking would be of little use to him."

A MAN ALMOST TOO GOOD FOR THE WORLD.

THE Late Babu Krishna Chandra Majumdar of Jessore (Bengal) was a poet and a man of sterling honesty. He was simple as a country girl and judged men's hearts by their professions. Once upon a time his salary as the senior teacher of Sanskrit in the Government school at Jessore, was proposed to be raised whereupon he went home to his old servant and asked him whether or no the money that he gave him month after month for house-keeping was sufficient for the purpose. The servant replied it was. At this Krishna Chandra came back to school and told the Headmaster that he did not want any increment to his pay as what he got then was enough for the needs of his household. The increment intended for him might be given to another man whose necessity would make it welcome!

Another day he went out to shop. He chose the article he wanted at a dealer's and asked to know its price. The man was dishonest, as many there are who take advantage of the simplicity

and inexperience of their customers. Krishna Chandra who did not know how to higgle nor thought it necessary, for he trusted all men, traders or no traders, paid down the price demanded which was much in excess of the real and reasonable and came away. Strange to say that his dishonesty practised on the simplicity and faith of the gentleman smote the trader's heart soon afrerwards. With the excess over the proper price in his pocket he ran after Krishna Chandra and overtaking him on his way home paid him back the money with many apologies. Goodness sometimes shames dishonesty out of its wicked ways.

My third story about Majumdar is rather funny; but, nevertheless, it shows how tender the conscience was that ruled him. He had done something which after weeks of anxious consideration he decided in his own mind to be wrong and criminal because it was injurious to a neighbour of his. The neighbour, however, thought nothing of it nor blamed him nor complained. Krishna Chandra went to him and begged him to accept a compensation. The man would not hear of it. He then went to the Magistrate and told him of his criminal doing. It was of such a

trifling nature that the magistrate who intimately knew him, laughingly said that the law provided no punishment for it. Besides, the case could not be tried for want of a complainant. Whereupon Krishna Chandra formally accused himself in writing and laid the paper in due style before the court. The magistrate seeing that the good man's conscience would not release him unless he had paid some sort of penalty fined him one rupee in open court.

TULSI AND HIS WIFE.

TULSIDAS of the Doab, a very great religious reformer was founder of a sect which counts millions in its fold. India is the land of spirituality, and nothing has grown in its soil more abundantly than moral philosophy and religion. It is said that Tulsi was born under the influence of a malignant star the result of which was the death of his father immediately after his birth. His poor mother had not the means to bring him up, nor would the neighbours help the ill-starred child for fear of being involved in his misfortunes. But a stranger, a holy man, adopted him and educated him with care.

Tulsi married in early youth and was much attached to his wife ; so much so, that he could not bear her to be out of sight for a day. Once upon a day the young woman anxious to visit her parents at their home set out for it without her husband's knowledge. When Tulsi came to know of it, he ran after her at his swiftest speed and overtaking her on the road begged her either to return or take him with her. The lady was annoyed. "Husband," said she in the spirit of the mistress of Bilwamangal whose story I have

written, "this is panting love quite unworthily bestowed on such as me. Why not make Ram, our lord, the object of it? No panting is enough panting after him." The words miraculously effected an immediate and complete change in Tulsi's feelings, as similar words did in those of Bilwamangal. He averted his eyes from her face and did not turn them again on it. He flew from her, and as one who renounced the world for God sought His grace thenceforth by devotion to Him. He made pilgrimages to all the holy places in India whose name was legion and living long now at one place and then at another attained to old age. But his renunciation and acts of devotion and pilgrimages did not altogether wean him from the world, as would soon appear.

Wandering about aimlessly he once found himself in his own country and even at his father-in-law's house where his deserted wife, as old as himself, lived. Her special duty, imposed by herself, in the house was to entertain guests. Tulsi did not know his wife, as she sat by him assisting him to cook his meal. But she knew him inspite of the changes in his appearance wrought by so much time, his wanderings and

his ascetic habits of life. Now, the wife said, "Shall I fetch you some pepper for the curry?" Tulsi replied, "No, you need not, I have got some in my wallet." Then, after a few minutes when camphor was necessary for some of the other articles of food and she begged permission to go and get a pinch of it, the same answer was given by Tulsi : there was some in a phial in the wallet. Whereupon the wife revealed herself and said with a dry smile, "Husband, what good has your desertion of the world and wife done you if you are still so careful to store up pepper and camphor, and goodness knows what else in your capacious wallet for future contingencies ? Renunciation to be complete is to be characterised by complete disregard of this world's goods, gold or pepper or camphor or whatever else they be, and entire dependence on God for the body's needs cut down as low as possible."

The wife was destined to be the husband's monitor a second time. Tulsi started again for his holy places throwing away his wallet and now cared no more for the morrow than beast or bird ; and thus, altogether freed from earthly care, he could devote his whole soul to God. He was accorded grace at last.

PADMA LOCHAN'S LARGE HEART.

LORD Carmichæl of Skirling, the first Governor of Bengal, visited Padma Lochan Ghosh in his house of small thatched huts at the out-of-the-way village of Hashara in Dacca ; and all the country side stood in dense crowds and sat on the housetops and perched on branches of trees to see the *Lat* (Lord) shake hands and speak with him. This Padma Lochan was a common village school-master, but a man of uncommon heart and charity. His monthly income derived from his ragged scholars had amounted to no more than the insignificant sum of Rs. 10 ! But the man had carefully laid by every possible pice of it, himself and wife and children living on the scanty produce of his few patches of rice and jute until his savings totalled 4 thousand rupees with which money—would you believe it ?—he founded and endowed a hospital in his village for the poor sick. *Poor* certainly ; but he was no less poor than any of them. Therefore it was that the noble baron hearing of and perceiving the nobility of poor Padma Lochan went all the way from the city of Dacca through rice and

jute field lanes and village paths to see and by seeing do honour to the great humble man creating wonder in the minds of the village folk and emulation to do similar acts of public good. The speech which he made on this occasion has been preserved. A portion of it is quoted below :—

"I am especially glad to have an opportunity of encouraging men to give of the means God has entrusted them with to help their fellow-men. I can imagine no more noble example than that of my friend Padma Lochan Ghosh, who after spending his life in educating the young, now in the evening of his days turns back to his own village home to spend all the savings of his lifetime in building a dispensary for the relief of his suffering neighbours. May God bless him for his good deed."

THE FAITHFUL INDIAN SOLDIERS.

THIS short story dates back to the early days of British settlement in India when the British merchant company were struggling for their very existence in the country with the French in the thin shadows of worthless native princes in whose unending civil wars they always espoused the opposite sides. The British championed Mahamad Ali, the son of the deceased Nawab of the Carnatic in Southern India, whilst the French championed Raja Saheb, the son of his son-in-law; but, in truth, the acute Europeans fought for no hand but their own and would be not a whit less content to see the one than the other on the throne if only they could, like Sindbad's old man of the sea, sit tight astride his shoulders.

Clive who had been bred a book-keeper but had developed into a keen soldier after his two failures to shoot himself through the head, took Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, on Muhamad Ali's behalf and then defended it against the enemy, Raja Saheb, with the French behind him. Clive's was apparently a forlorn hope : for the fort was in a very ruinous condition, quite incapable of sustaining a seige. The garrison

consisted of only a hundred and twenty Europeans and two hundred local sepoys while those who sat before the gates numbered ten thousand men. Provision was scanty and getting scantier with every day that passed. Towards the close of the second month of the weary siege famine seemed very likely to do the work of destruction which the might of the besiegers had failed to. Fears might also be reasonably entertained of mutiny among the hungry garrison—if not among the handful of European soldiers, among the Indians who differed from their commander in colour, creed, language and manners. But no! the Indians were devoted to their commander and true to their European comrades. They came to Clive not to complain of their scanty fare, but to propose that their European comrades who required more nourishment for the maintenance of their strength than they should have all the grain; the thin gruel strained away from the rice would suffice for them! It is not recorded whether Clive accepted the proposal. Most probably he did not. But such devotion as these men's has not been surpassed by what has been recorded of the Tenth Legion of Cæsar or of the Old Guard of Napolean.

RAM GOPAL GHOSH.

THE American writer, Washington Irving, lauding Mr. Roscoe of Liverpool, the talented author of "Life of Lorenzo de Medici" and an (unsuccessful) banker considers this as his peculiar title to men's praise that he "claimed none of the accorded privileges of literary talent," but "went forth into the highways and thoroughfares of life" and jostled with the common crowds of the busy sons of traffic instead of shutting himself up in "the garden of thought" and "elysium of fancy." A Bengalee of this type was Ram Gopal Ghosh of Calcutta, philosopher, orator, and head of a wealthy trading firm, "R. G. Ghosh and Co." His philosophical journal the "Seeker of wisdom" won him India-wide fame, his political speeches and activities made him a power in the land in his time and his very successful business raised him to affluence.

In this story I do not mean, however, to tell how deeply he studied and thought, nor how well he wrote and spoke, nor even how cleverly he bought and sold, but how sympathetically he felt for his fellow-men in distress and how sincerely he loved truth.

Ramgopal used to give and lend largely out of his plenty. He kept no record of his charities, but for the loans he granted notes-of-hand were, of course, taken and preserved. In his last illness which lingered he one day called for these notes-of-hand and examined them and thought long of the debtors who had executed them and whose circumstances he intimately knew. He sent for the poorest of them, and when they came uneasily thinking of an urgent demand for repayment of their loans which they had no means of satisfying, he smiled serenely on them and told them that their loans amounting in aggregate to over forty thousand rupees were cancelled ! He tore their bonds in their presence to pieces. Grant he was wealthy. But is not the wealthy man's love of wealth greater and his care for its preservation and growth more assiduous than the poor man's love and care for his thin purse ? What other rich man could, like him, willingly lose forty thousand rupees ?

Ram Gopal was one of the first products of English education in Bengal which in those days used to unsettle the young scholar's principles and drive him from the anchorage of time-honoured orthodox custom. He ate the Euro-

pean's prohibited food, drank his wine and broke through the trammels of caste. For these crimes the orthodox society inflicted a sort of ostracism on him. He and his relatives were denied the benefits of the services of the society's priest, washerman and barber. On his grandfather's death the village priest would not, according to the *shastras*, consecrate the corpse to the fire nor his caste-men help in its cremation. It was found, however, that these people who had great respect for the orthodoxy of the defunct grandfather could be conciliated and persuaded to lend their services if only Ram Gopal publicly denied his un-Hindu eating and drinking. But he would not deny them; he would not tell a lie for even so great a purpose as the proper disposal of his grand-father's corpse. He offered the men a large donation if that would satisfy them; but he would not deny the truth. The donation was, as was to be expected, accepted.

THE SERVANT GIRL'S QUESTION.

A LITTLE servant-girl one evening made the bed of her master, and having made it sat on it. Another servant caught her in the act and rebuked her saying, "You low slut, how dare you sit on the Babu's bed?" The girl naively answered, "Are not all men equal?" The master who came in at that moment and had heard both the rebuke and the question in answer asked himself, "Are they?" and sat thoughtfully in a chair. The lines of Burns rose spontaneously to his lips :—

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

A MARTYR'S DEATH.

FROM what I have read of the Mahomedan sovereigns of India I have this impression that they were, with only a few exceptions, a scholarly set and that they were ardent promoters of scholarship. Learning in themselves and promotion of it in others were with them two of the chief attributes of royalty. By the way, I may also remark that the general conduct of these monarchs furnished a convincing proof of the fact that neither secular nor theological erudition without wisdom, which is quite a distinct thing and not always begotten of them, can save a person from being bigoted, intolerant, heartless, hungry of other people's substance, and thirsty of their blood.

Sikander Lodi, king of Delhi, was a profound scholar, a master of Islamic theology, a poet and a great patron of learning. His passion was religious disputation. He entertained a host of doctors of all the principal religions, Islamic, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist and Jain and delighted in their eternal wranglings and oftentimes took part in them. But obviously these were not

open-minded polemics designed to bring out the truth, but were intended only to elevate Islam by any means, by haughty bearing, loudness and bullying—even by worse measures.

There was once such a contest between Pundit Budhan, arguing for Hinduism and a number of Maulavis arguing for Islam. It was a long and obstinate fight fought day after day for over a week ; and on the part of the Pundit t was a fight against great odds, for not only had the Maulavis the advantage of position as belonging to the ruling race, but they were also backed by the sovereign who was a deep theologian, as has been said, and a skilful debator. At last the referees who were all Mussalmans adjudged the Hindu vanquished and the superiority of Islam over Hinduism gloriously established.

Sikander who had taken particular offence at the pertinacity and home-thrusts of the Hindu whose zeal may have sometimes outrun his discretion in the choice of his phrases, had him indicted before himself of malicious obstinacy, as his stubborn defence of his creed was called, and of insulting the true faith. He found him, as was to be expected, guilty and condemned

him to immediate death. He was, however, given the option of redeeming his life by immediate conversion to Islam. The brave man unhesitatingly chose the martyr's death.

LOVING CHARITY.

The late Babu Prankrishna Ganguli of whom I have already spoken once was in the habit of dividing his bread with some of the poor of his village. He was not wealthy, but he was above want, for he and the members of his family under his training needed but little to live from day to day and healthily and cheerfully too. Prankrishna and his son both earned monthly salaries by service, the son more than the father. There was feast in his house every day—not feast in the richness and variety of the viands nor in noisy joviality and riot, but in the sitting and meeting of many at the simple meals, in the loving looks and sweet smiles which accompanied them and in the unspoken blessings which were interchanged in the company.

Alas ! the sunny path of life was suddenly darkened for Prankrishna. His son sickened and died. The death cut the good man's heart in two ; and apart from that, it brought in poverty to the family though its wants were so few and simple. The poor dependants of the family, the poor villagers whose daily meals had for long been

supplied by Prankrishna, began to keep away at meal-times, now that he was poor, although they did not fail to share with him and his family their sorrows and to serve them with their hands as they best could. Prankrishna marked this and his grief at it was no less poignant than that at the great bereavement. So he called them together and spoke to them in these words: —
"You must not deprive us of your company at our family meals, dear neighbours. It has been additional sorrow to us these days that you have. As long as there is any food, however small its quantity, in the house, let us share it with you who are no less of the house than we are."

Such loving charity is rare in these degenerate days.

A STORY OF THREE IDEALS.

THE nature and extent of man's success in life are determined by the intensity of his own desire for it. Three young students of the long defunct Hindu college of Calcutta, Madhusudan Dutta, Abdul Latif and Bhudeb Mukherjee were friends and sometimes sat together in vacant hours earnestly discussing their schemes of life and the dearest wishes of their hearts for the future. Madhusudan wished for nothing more fervently than for the name and fame of a great poet. Abdul Latif's highest ambition was to be a high official, a pillar of the state, titled, honoured and courted. Bhudeb longed to be a benefactor of his country who should for ever live in its grateful memory. They were all earnest men. All through life they worked for the attainment of their ideals. So Madhusudan wrote his *Meghnad Badh*, an epic poem which holds the same rank in Bengali as Paradise Lost in English. Abdul Latif rose to be a magistrate of the first grade in the Bengal provincial service and latterly, chief minister in the feudatory state of Bhopal and was honoured with the title of Nawab and

made a companion of the Indian Empire. Bhudeb, as an inspector of schools, filled Bengal with schools of all descriptions, wrote several wholesome books and edited a paper, called the "Education Gazette," which helped very largely the cause of education in the country and left by a will at his death a *lakh* of rupees, the whole saving of his life, to found or endow schools of Sanskrit learning.

Thus each of these three men amply fulfilled the ideal of life he had set before himself at the threshold of his career.

THE CLEVER HINDUS.

THE fiat had gone forth from the durbar of Ferozsha Tughlak, sultan of Delhi, that any one worshipping an idol in the city should be put to death and his property confiscated unless he should expiate his sin by embracing Islam. A Brahman was one day found guilty of idol-worship. He was hauled up before the kazi and, as he would not relinquish his own faith for the Arabian prophet's, he was condemned to be burned at the stake. The strong man died the death of a martyr. There was consternation among the Hindus.

Some clever men among them put their heads together and set up an image of the Sultan himself in a public place on the Sultan's accustomed way to the mosque. They decorated it with ornaments of flowers, burnt incense before it and sang the praise of the sovereign which it represented. They did this day after day. The Sultan saw the worship and heard the praise as did the kazi and his other great people. They were all very pleased at the loyalty of the Hindus, the Sultan more than

the rest. The man who was high priest of the worship was summoned to *dewan-i-khas* or audience chamber of the king, who intending to bestow on him some marks of royal favour designed to ask what he would have. "*Jaha-pana*" (Your Majesty), said the man, "this that you annul your edict against image-worship by us, Hindus. Our worship of your image has given you pleasure; why should that of God's give you offence? Let us be loyal and loving to both in our own way, *Shah-in-shah* (king of kings)."

The order was revoked.

IN DOING ONE'S DUTY.

BABU Jatindra Nath Ganguli was a young man, an inspector of telegraphic wires in the Central Provinces. In August, 1910, there were heavy rains in the country and the streams were swollen and their strong currents pierced the rail roads in several places and threw down the telegraph posts. One such event happened in the neighbourhood of Raipur. The road was breached and a post was undermined which by its fall would break the wire. Telegraphic communication would be stopped and the station next to Raipur on the further side of the breach ignorant of the interruption on the line would pass on the train to be wrecked. The time for the train was close at hand. Jatindra Babu's blood froze in his veins to think of the impending catastrophe. He had a man with him whom he bade run at his fastest speed to Raipur to ask the signaller at that station to wire to the next about the breach and to stop the train while he with a coil a rope wound round his waist sprang into the raging, roaring water to swim across to the tottering telegraph-post which

he yet hoped to hold in upright position with his rope for a while, at least. He was a strong swimmer. But his strength did not avail him against the mad swirl of the water. He was lost in two seconds—lost in the performance of his duty of which he had undoubtedly thought more than of the great risk to his own life. It is, however, a satisfaction to know that his dutifulness was appreciated and a sincere grief was felt at his sad end. The government bestowed a pension on his widow for life.

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DURGABATI.

DURGABATI was won for wife in the right Rajput fashion of the olden times. Dalpat Shah of the Gaur-Rajput family, chief of Garmandal, had long and vainly sought for her hand of her father, chief of Mahaba (Hamirpur) and of the rival Rajput family of Chandel. It seems an ancient feud existed between the two houses; and the princess's father had not overcome the prejudices and was not in the mood to end the long feud by a matrimonial alliance. At last Dalpat determined to win his bride by the edge of his sword, and he did. He stormed Mahaba, took it and when some time after he rode out of the palace-gates, he had Durgabati riding her palfrey by his side, her bridal veil drawn over her fair face which shone as the sun behind a thin, white cloud. Dalpat's fame spread far and wide in India.

But Durgabati's happiness was of short tenure. She lost her husband within four years of her wedding, when her son, the heir to the state, was only three years old. In her grief she would have burnt herself with her husband's

remains but for her infant prince who smiled in her face and coaxed her back to her duty to him and to the state and to the world at large. She ruled Garmandal as regent and guardian and cared for it so wisely and well that in a few years the land overflowed with milk and honey, as it never before had done.

Alas! Its property was its ruin. The Great Moghul Emperor Akbar's earth-hunger was roused by the reports of its fatness. He commanded his general in Southern India, Asaf Khan, to lose no time in falling upon the state. And he lost no time. An army, 18,000 strong, was soon got up which, under his able leadership, marched to within a few miles of Sinhagarh, the capital, before Durgabati could offer any resistance. But when she could, she beat the enemy, even the mighty Moghul enemy, and drove him beyond the limits of her state. To say she was brave is to say too little. She was her, own general-in-chief. She was fully worthy of her late husband who had won her by the edge of his sword.

But the Moghul was tenacious of purpose, if anything. The whole history of his Indian rule bears ample evidence to it. Asaf Khan re-

cuperated his strength and before many months were over, returned to the attack with a larger host than before. Durgabati, mounted on her war-elephant, fully armed and encased in a coat of mail over her widow's weeds tucked round her slim body, fought and directed the fight as before. But this time the fortune of the day went against her. Most of her captains were killed one after another, her army almost cut to pieces and she herself severely wounded in the right eye and cheek. She could save herself by flight, and it was earnestly and lovingly proposed by those who still surrounded her. She answered with a mysterious smile on her blood-stained lips, "Flight ? Yes ; and presently too !" With that she snatched a small dagger from the hand of her *mahut* (the driver of the elephant) and before she could be prevented, she stabbed herself through the heart and fell back on her seat dead.

A Rajput, man or woman, cannot take a defeat.

FOR OLD DAY'S SAKE.

BABU Nilmani Sadhukhan, M.A., a young man of about 24, had just passed out of his college and was on the eager look-out for some employment as teacher in one or another of the numerous schools in the country. For he was of a family very poor just then and without the father who had died sometime before, and unless the young graduate could turn his academic qualifications to some account for earning bread, himself and the family might starve. It so happened that an assistant mastership in the Hindu Academy at Chinsura on the Hughli, some miles above Calcutta, fell vacant and as the president of the managers of the school was an old friend of his family and was known to be partial to him, a really well-equipped bright young man, Nilmani Babu felt sure that he had only to ask for the situation to obtain it. He communicated these circumstances to his poverty-stricken family and spoke to them of his confident hope all which cheered them very much. He lost no time in drawing up a formal application for the post, and with it in his pocket

set out to see the president who expected him. On his way he fell in with a former college-mate of his who stopped him and asked him where he was going. He told him. "It is fortunate," said the college-mate, "that I have met you and that you are going to call on the president. I too am bound the same way. Would you like to know why?" He told him that he was going to beg of the president the assistant mastership in the Hindu Academy. The appointment would suit his circumstances and conveniences nicely. His poor old mother at home was in bad health; he could not leave her at home for service at a distance; employment at the academy would enable him both to look after her constantly and to bring grist to the mill. Then, suddenly remembering that Nilmani Babu stood in high favour with the president he grasped him with both hands and said, "Dear Nilmani, do me the service of recommending me to the president for old days' sake, for your love of me."

Nilmani Babu heard his friend in deep silence as if spell-bound. Then he thought for a while; then his face wore a serene smile. He took his friend by the hand and hurried him along

the streets to the president at his office and warmly recommended him to the employer. "But what for you?" said the president, "how can you do without this post, this means of maintenance? You have none else." "No," replied the good youth, "but I do not mind, I shall wait for a further opportunity. Besides, this young gentleman's necessity is greater than mine." This was Sir Phillip Sydney's self-sacrifice in another, but no less admirable, form showing that the same type of generosity dwelt in the bosom of the poor Bengalee youth as in that of the noble and gallant knight of Elizabeth's whose untasted cup of water has embalmed him in men's minds.

TEG BAHADUR.

CAPTAIN MOORE has said that Teg Bahadur of the 37th Goorkhas was as ugly a little man as you would *not* like to look upon. Besides that his face was deeply pitted by small pox, a more malicious leopard had torn away a chunk out of it. One day the captain was in the jungle at Ghoom and heard the sound of wood-cutting in a forest reserve where wood-cutting was forbidden. It was in the "leave season" and every superior officer had cleared out and the captain was in command. When he appeared in the clearing, he saw three pairs of heels scurrying away. The captain, however, recognised Teg Bahadur and called him to the orderly room.

"You were cutting wood ?" the captain said.

"Yes, *Shaheb* (Sir)."

"You know it is against orders ?"

"Yes, *Shaheb.*"

"Why did you run away ?"

"When we saw you coming, we were frightened, and had to bolt."

"Is there any reason why you should not be punished ?"

"Yes, *Shaheb*. It is a first offence, and the colonel *Shaheb* never punishes a first offence."

"There were two others."

"Yes, *Shaheb*."

"Tell me their names."

"No, *Shaheb*. *We do not betray one another*. Perhaps, if I talk to them a little in the canteen, they will come to you themselves and confess."

The next day the two men came and confessed and were forgiven.

It is a simple story with no point to one inexperienced in the baseness of the major part of the world. But to one accustomed to it the words, "We do not betray one another" mark their speaker as genuine gold.

PART II

CONSECRATED

TO

THE MEMORY OF

My dearly beloved daughter,

BASANTA BA'LA' DEVEE

who in her too—too short life bore herself so that at her death she has left all the world about her weeping for her.

THE CONTENTS.

ANECDOTES
OF
INDIAN LIFE

A ROMAN FATHER.

THE annals of ancient Rome tell how a general ordered the execution of his son for some flagrant breach of military discipline. The following story proves that an Indian father was cast in the same mould as the stoical Roman.

A petty chief of Rajputana named Rào Surtan was driven from his state by Pāthàn (Mussalmàn) invaders, and fled for refuge with his family to Mewar. The exile's one thought was to regain his territory ; but feeling himself too weak to attempt so desperate an enterprise, he offered the hand of his lovely daughter, Tàrà Bài by name, to any prince who should evict the usurpers. Jaymalla, son of Raimalla, *rana* (king) of Mewar, longed to possess the maiden whose beauty was famous through Rajputana.

But dreading an encounter with the fierce Pàthàna, he resolved to carry her off by force.

At the head of a gang of followers, he burst into Rào Surtan's house and made for the girl's apartments. The sudden invasion of his home took the Rào by surprise ; but he put up a stout resistance. Aided by kinsmen who readily answered his cries for help, he attacked the brigands with fury and cut Jaymalla down with his own hands. His fall discouraged his fellow-desperados many of whom were slain and the remnant fled in confusion.

Rana Raimalla received tidings of the tragedy with brows overcast and in ominous silence. But when the courtiers around him suggested that he ought to avenge his son's death, he replied : "The man who outraged a father's honour and that father in distress richly merited his fate !" Moreover, in order to dissociate himself from his unworthy son, he bestowed the district of Bednour on Rào Surtan.

FEEDING A MAD WOMAN.

I HAD once occasion to remark that the life of the illustrious Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyàsàgar has contributed as much or more to the folk-lore of Bengal than those of her other great sons put together ; and I have already had the pleasure to record several of his doings and sayings. Here is another story to show "the milk of human kindness" with which his heart was filled.

Bàbu Kàlicharan Ghosh was an officer of state who might live happily, as things went, by his service. But he was very unhappy in that in the middle of his life his dearly beloved wife, Kuntidevi, was afflicted with insanity and no physic, no change of scene or surroundings could cure her. One day in the Calcutta residence of the family the lady took it into her head to refuse food unless it was raised to her lips by the great scholar and philanthropist, Vidyàsàgar, of whom she, as every one else in Bengal, had heard and whom her husband knew personally. She fasted for two whole days before Kàlicharan Bàbu could make up his mind to appeal to the

great man to afford relief to his poor demented wife. Vidyàsàgar did not need to be asked twice. As soon as he heard the request from the husband who stammered it out with many apologies, he rose and followed the gentleman to his distant house. There he fed the insane woman tenderly and patiently obeying her many whims in the eating, as a mother would her petulant child ; and that not for a day or two but for months together, so long as her fantasy lasted.

5

HONOUR IN DEATH.

THE great mutiny of 1857 which shook the very foundation of the British dominion in India has swallowed up by its magnitude, its terrific nature and the variety of its incidents the memory of all the other military rebellions which had previously taken place in Bengal and southern India. I may here rescue from oblivion an incident which happened in the Bengal mutiny of 1764.

It must be admitted that in the early days of the Company's rule in India the Sepoy (the Indian soldier) by whose substantial aid it had won its victories over the Indian sovereigns, was often ill-treated by his British officers. The Sepoy's complaints were many. "If he were to pass his whole life in the Company's service" says an impartial English historian, "and do what he might, he could not rise higher than the rank of Subadàr, (non-commandant officer). There had been times when distinguished native soldiers had been appointed to high and lucrative commands and had faithfully done their duty ; but those times had passed and, instead of being exalted, native officers were habitually degraded. A sepoy on duty always presented

or carried arms to an English officer, but an English soldier suffered a native officer to pass by without a salute. Even an English sergeant commanded native officers of the highest rank ;" and so forth.

But this injustice was not the immediate cause of the trouble with the sepoys of Bengal in 1764. The incitement came in this instance from the European soldiers, their comrades in arms. These men first mutinied because the promise of a donation to them had halted on the way to performance. The authorities were alarmed, and in the perturbation of their mind rained rupees on the mutineers. They spoke to them soothingly, admitting that they had just grounds for their conduct, none juster ; but now that each man had 40 rupees, they should be content and quietly return to duty. They did so ; and not a single man among them was made to suffer for his rebellion.

Here was a grave mistake, the consequence of which was soon seen. The sepoy regiments mutinied before the year was out. An attempt was made to pacify them by concessions ; but in this case each sepoy was offered only 6 rupees which did not satisfy him. The donation was

raised to Rs. 20. Not even this was enough. The confusion spread. One battalion seized and imprisoned its English officers and vowed that it would serve no more.

Then Major Hector Munro, chief of the Bengal army, suddenly recovered his wisdom, as people sometimes will, and arrested the evil with a strong hand. Twenty-four ringleaders were arrested and tried by a drum-head court-martial at Chupra for mutiny, found guilty and ordered to be blown away from the guns. The troops, European and Indian, were immediately drawn up, the guns were loaded and the prisoners led forth to suffer. The major gave the word of command for the first four of the men being tied up to a gun. The order was about to be obeyed when four tall grenadiers stepped forward from among the rest of the condemned and in accents as loud as the clang of the bell from their own temple of worship, they said :—"Major *Saheb*, as we have always held the post of honour in life, we pray that honourable precedence may be given us in death!" Not a man was there, European or Indian, on that parade but was moved to tears by these words. They had their wish and were the first to suffer.

HELPING WITH A BUNDLE OF FUEL.

Mr. Justice Mahadev Govinda Ranade was one of the most distinguished Indians in the closing decade of the last century not only as a member of the highest judiciary in his province of Bombay, but also as a scholar, an author, a patriot and a lover of his kind. He earned a more than comfortable salary from his high office and a good income from his books ; yet he lived and dressed quite plainly and might have been mistaken in the street for a man of the lower middle class. He was a nationalist to the backbone and wore his native costume even on the bench.

Once while he was walking home from court, a poor woman accosted him saying, "Brother, a word with you." He stopped at once and enquired how he might serve her. She wanted him to help her with a bundle of fuel by which she stood and see her safely over the crossing. And Ranade, Chief Judge of the highest civil court at Poona, lifted the burden on the woman's head and led her gently by the hand across the crowded road. There was certainly a clear stamp of his heart on his face which the peasant woman could read and the reading of which had emboldened her to address herself to him among hundreds of passers-by.

THE STORY OF A BEREAVED MOTHER.

THE story is in the *Theri* songs about Buddha, the "Light of Asia." It is this :—

A young woman had lost her only child, her first-born son, and wept "like a Niobe" at Lord Buddha's feet and "knew no consolation." She took the cold corpse from her breast and holding it up to Him begged Him over and over again to breathe the spark of life into it. "Thou art the Lord," said she, "and hast life and death in thy hands. Do thou give me back the child of my bosom."

Days and nights passed over their heads while Buddha in vain tried to console the bereaved mother. She still prayed with folded hands and streaming eyes, "Lord, do thou give me back the child of my bosom."

Then said the Enlightened One to the bereaved mother to teach her by something she might better understand, "Daughter, fetch me a handful of mustard seeds wherewith to call life back to the lifeless. But hark thee, the seeds must be got from a man or woman that had not the death of a dear one to mourn or they shall fail in their virtue."

Accordingly, the bereaved mother with the dead child at her breast went from man to man and from woman to woman up and down the country begging of each for a handful of mustard seeds wherewith to call back life to the lifeless. "But hark ye," said she, "ye must not have had the death of a dear one that ye mourned to give me the seeds, or they shall fail in their virtue." They all said they had had deaths of dear ones that they mourned and, therefore, could not give the seeds, as they would fail in their virtue.

Then, by the grace of the Lord, her eyes were opened to light and she took the dear child from her breast and buried it and returning to the Enlightened One, said, "Lord, I understand. The law is law for me as it is for all the rest. Where is the reason for weeping then?"

II

HA'MID KHA'N.

THREE have been loyal men in all countries and ages ready to risk anything in the service of their princes. Such a one was an Arab officer, Hàmid Khàn by name, chief of prince Azim-us-shan's body-guard. Azim-us-shan was Emperor Auranzebe's grandson and governor of Bengal.

There was a rebellion in the Burdwan district under the leadership of Sobhà singh, a Hindu, and Rahim Khàn, a Pàthàn, in Azim-us-shan's *regime*. The prince's camp was once surprised and surrounded by the rebels. Before his troops could get well under arms, there was much confusion and some unresisted slaughter. A large body of men under Rahim Khàn himself invaded the prince's quarters and put him in great peril. His guard were hastily arming and mounting—they were not quite ready. The prince who was already on his horse was observed by Hàmid Khàn with but very few men to support him defending himself with great difficulty against odds. In all human probability he could not do so much longer.

At this emergency Hàmid Khàn, in order to divert the attack from the prince to himself,

caused the royal standard-bearer to hold the standard before himself and bidding the men about him shout, "the prince !" "the prince !"—as if he were the prince—cut his way through a portion of the troop which was assaulting the prince and his few supporters and rushed onward. His purpose was effected. The men who were pressing Azim-us-shan so hard immediately left him and gave chase to Hamid's party, whereupon the latter turned round and gave them battle. The battle was won ; Rahim Khàn was killed. His severed head held up on the point of a lance struck the rebel army with panic and they fled from the field in confusion.

Prince Azim-us-shan was a proud young man who could not bear to be obliged to any man. The talk of the camp that Hàmid Khàn had saved his life sorely offended him and he did not lose time to take the faithful officer severely to task for degrading his colours by causing them to be borne before himself and for personating him. Hàmid Khàn gave a plain answer :—"I did all this for you ; I am ready to take anything from your hands in return for my acts."

He was not molested after this answer.

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

A MISSIONARY of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland speaking recently in a public place in the city of Bombay said, "Salvation is denied to Hindus, Buddhists, idolators, Zoroastrians, the Shia, Sunni and Wahabi Mussalmans, to Roman Catholic Christians, Church of England men and those who belong to the Greek, Armenian and Syrian churches. It is assured to the Presbyterians and even among these only to those men and women who neither drink nor smoke and those women who do not wear any jewellery on their persons." A Zoroastrian Parsee who was among the audience thereupon exclaimed, "Father *padre*, for how few, then, did your Christ come down to the earth ?"

We had thought that the days of religious intolerance was over.

RAJPUT COURTESY.

THE chivalrous courtesy of the knights of medieval Europe has been the theme of many a song. But it was not without parallel in the annals of the Rajputs of India. Their highly strung sense of honour and of what was due to kinship or friendship or hospitality made them sometimes behave in a way which angels would admire. Here is a story in point :—

When of the three princes of Mewar one was in hiding from fear of the implacable enmity of another and that another was in banishment from the state by command of his indignant father, the king, and the third had been killed in a shameful scuffle, the king Rajmalla was apparently without an heir to his ancient throne. A cousin, Surjyamalla, aspired to it. In his impatience he did not wait till Rajmalla should be removed by nature, or, what the Rajput most wished, by the sword or lance of the enemy on the gory field of battle, but raised the standard of rebellion and assailed the southern frontier of the state. A battle was fought in which the royal troops led by the *rana* himself was hard

pressed when the second prince, Prithviraj, appeared, nobody knew from where, at the head of a thousand horse and gave very acceptable relief to his father. The prince selected his uncle, Surjyamalla, as the special object of his personal attention and covered him with wounds. The sun set over the undecided fight and the two armies retired by mutual consent to bivouac in sight of each other.

Prithviràj put off his mail and rested, and having rested walked alone to his uncle's camp. He found him in a small tent reclining on a pallet after having his many wounds dressed by his barber. Surjya rose painfully but respectfully to greet his nephew when the following conversation took place between the two: Prithviraj—"How are your wounds, uncle ?" Surjyamalla—"Quite healed, my child, since I have the pleasure to see you." Prithvi—"Glad to hear it ; but, uncle, I have not yet seen father. I have run to see you first ; am so hungry. Is there anything to eat ?"

Dinner was immediately served and the strange couple ate off the same platter, nor did Prithviràj hesitate to eat the *pan* leaf which was offered him at the close of the meal and at

parting, according to the custom, though he full well knew that murders were commonly committed in those days by means of poisoned spices in the leaf. Prithviràj bade his host goodnight saying, "You and I shall finish the battle, uncle, in the morning" to which the equally courteous uncle replied, "Very well, my child, come early."

THE MOTHER'S PRIDE.

CORNELIA, the mother of the Gracchi, brought in her two sons and stood between them in answer to the challenge from a Campanion lady who visited at her house to show her what jewels she had, saying, "These are my jewels of which I boast." It is strange how words and events repeat themselves in the world in the course of ages. Human nature is everywhere the same inspite of difference of creed, colour and adventitious circumstances. What was said in Rome by a Roman lady in the 2nd century B. C. was unconsciously reproduced by a Bengalee lady, Bhagabati Devi, mother of our Vidyàsàgar, under similar circumstances in Bengal in the 19th century A. D.

When Vidyàsàgar rose to fame by his scholarship, by his eminent services to the state and, most of all by his philanthropic labours, he made many friends among the high-placed Englishmen in Bengal. One of these was Sir Frederick Halliday, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. This gentleman once expressed a wish to see the inside of a Bengalee

gentleman's home in Vidyàsàgar's presence, and the latter taking the hint invited him a few days afterwards to his ancestral house at Birsingha in the Midnapore district. Sir Frederick replied that he was anxious to accept the invitation and come and then jocosely, that he yet could not, as he had not been, according to the custom in his own country, asked by the mistress of the family. Upon this Vidyasàgar had a second letter of invitation written in proper style over the signature of his mother and sent to the official. So long as the mother lives, she is the mistress of the Hindu family, not the wife of the son, though he may be its male representative, its bread-winner, its everything else.

Sir Frederick came to the house and was received by Bhagabati Devi assisted by her sons. She was old enough to be his mother and, therefore, dispensed with the customary *purdah*. It is said that at meal the European gentleman squatted on a carpet on the floor, as the oriental does, and even attempted to eat with his fingers instead of with the fork and spoons which had been provided. Dinner over, Sir Frederick who was charmed by the sweetness of the old

lady's manners had a long chitchat with her in the course of which, he touching upon the pecuniary resources of the family as delicately as possible, the lady said, "I have seven nuggets of gold, *baba-saheb* (son-Englishman)." Sir Frederick expressed his astonishment at this. "So much wealth!" said he. "Yes, yes," smilingly replied Bhagabati, "here are they." And calling to her side her seven sons who were within call displayed them as proudly as the Roman lady, I have spoken of, had paraded her two.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT.

CHILDREN have read the story and admired the noble self-sacrifice of the Russian servant who threw himself among hungry wolves to save his master and his family in their light travelling carriage from the pursuit of these ferocious animals. I shall tell here of an Indian soldier-servant, Jàmàdàr Golàp Singh, who gave himself up to save his master and mistress to no less ferocious and bloodthirsty men at Meerut on the outbreak of the mutiny at that town on May 10, 1857.

He was Mr. Commissioner Harvey Greathed's servant and guarded his house along with others. All day the insurgent sepoys had run amuck up and down the European quarters of the town slaying men, women and children and plundering their houses. And the short Indian twilight had come and gone and darkness had descended upon the scene, yet the brutal work was not finished. Night was made hideous with the blaze of the houses which burnt in all directions, the roar of the flames, the cracking and crashing of the falling rafters and roofs, the yells of the

pursuing murderers and the shrieks of the pursued and the wounded. An Afghan, Sayed Meer Khan, undertook to escort Mr. Greathed and his wife to a place of safety. He made the attempt, but was wounded in the thigh and his horse was killed under him. So they returned to the house and by Golap Singh's advice hid themselves on the terraced roof. The mutineers surged round the house, killed or drove off most of the guard, broke into the rooms, gutted them and applied the firebrand. They met Golap Singh on the stair leading to the roof. He had a torch in one hand and a few things in the other, as if he too had been plundering. "Where are the Feringhee and his wife ?" cried some of the rebels. "My master and mistress have fled through the garden. I know they proposed to hide themselves in the haystack yonder. Come, let us follow. I can show you where they are." The sepoys believed him and taking him between two of themselves left the house. It was in the nick of time, for scarcely had Mr. Greathed descended with his wife into the garden immediately after the ruffians had left when a large part of the house fell in with a tremendous crash. Golap Singh took rather too long to guide

his captors to the haystack which did not exist. Their suspicions were at last roused, and foiled in their savage thirst for European blood one of them transfixed the noble servant with his bloody lance. Golap Singh died without a groan ; he was prepared for his fate.

PRINCE AZAM.

NELSON put his blind eye to the glass and pretended not to see his admiral's signal which ordered him to retreat. He fought on. Something over a century before his days of glory there lived a young warrior in India—a Moghul prince, whose appetite for fighting was as keen and whose determination as strong as those of the "greatest sailor of England" and who used a similar subterfuge to evade his general-in-chief's command.

Prince Azam was in command of the army which invested Bijapur, the capital of the Adil Sahi kingdom. The Bijapuris resisted stoutly from the walls of the city and by frequent and furious *sorties*, as opportunities occurred. But what reduced the besieging army to sore straits was the complete cutting off of their supplies by the enemy. The emperor Aurangzebe, general-in-chief, had his headquarters at Sholapur from whence he marked the progress of the siege through a large body of couriers and issued his orders. When his troops had eaten up the draught bullocks and camels, he ordered his son

to raise the siege and retire. The exact words in the despatch were, "Be removed from before the gates (of the city)." But Prince Azam was not at all willing to do so. He had just then gained some important advantages and thought that by energetically following them up he might carry the place. He was fighting morning, noon and afternoon—even in the watches of the night. But he feared to disobey his father who was stern, exacting and suspicious. He debated the matter for a minute in his mind and then, his blood being up, he cast his fears and prudential considerations to the winds. Calling his officers about him he said, "The Emperor commands me to be removed from before the gates of Bijapur ; but he does not say whether it should be me in my living or dead body. I take it he means the latter. So let us fight on, gentlemen, till, if it have been so ordained, my body is cold in death. Then it shall be removed as the general-in-chief desires !" The *nakaras* immediately sounded an onset by command and all thought of retreat was soon forgotten.

TANTIA TOPI'S DEFENCE.

"RENDER unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" is a golden rule, but the pity is that passions and prejudices so often stand in the way of its being followed.

Tantia Topi, general of Nana Saheb, the dethroned Peshwa, was a brave and resourceful warrior and devoted to his master—just such a man as deserved a niche in the temple of fame, history. But it has not been accorded him; on the contrary, he has been branded as a rebel. He was court-martialled and hanged.

You cannot but sympathise with the sorrow of the man who is betrayed to his enemy by one in whom he reposed implicit faith. Topi was betrayed to the English by his comrade-in-arms and, as he believed, his true friend, Man Singh, while he lay concealed in the Paron jungles.

Heavily fettered and strongly guarded, he was brought before General Meade, erstwhile his opponent in the field, to be tried by court-martial. His bearing was that of one who was conscious of having done nothing wrong, but of having done only what was right and of one who did not fear death. He was charged with having

been in rebellion and of having waged war with the British Government in certain specified instances. Tantia's defence was short, simple and manly : "I only obeyed in all things, my master, the Nana's orders. The British Government was not my master ; I owed it no allegiance. I was born and bred in the household of Baji Rao, an independent prince. From my childhood I have been taught to regard his son, Nana Saheb, as my liege lord whose every order I was bound to obey. I fought the British Government by his command. Therefore, my waging war against it was no rebellion."

Unimpeachable defence this. Yet he was found guilty and hanged.

A GATE BUILT UP AND RE-OPENED.

SHAESTA' Khàn was a truly patriarchal ruler. He loved his people no less sincerely than he ruled them justly and took honest pride in their prosperity. The powers of nature favoured him; for neither drought nor excessive rain nor locusts destroyed the fields in his *regime*. The husbandmen sowed hopefully, reaped plentifully and lived happily. Rice, the staple food-grain of Bengal, could be had in the bazar for a mere song: 640 lbs. for a rupee, 1⅓*s*. at the present valuation of the Indian coin. To commemorate this prosperous state of things the happy nawab, when he retired from service full of age and honour, had the western gate of Dacca, his capital, through which he passed out, built up and an inscription was placed thereon interdicting any future governor from opening it unless fortune should favour him, as she had favoured him, giving his people rice so cheap and making them, in consequence of it, so happy.

Sarfaraj Khàn who came to govern the country 36 years after Shaestà Khàn was extremely jealous of the latter's fortune and fame. He longed to open the gate; but it was not

possible that the condition attached to the opening should be fulfilled. The peasantry flourished, but not as extraordinarily well as in Shaestà Khàn's time. Rice did not sell exactly as cheap. Sarfaraj brooded over it long and painfully. At last, rather than forego his ambitious purpose, he resolved to artificially lower the rice-market. He forced the dealers all over the country by a decree of state to sell rice at the rate of which Shaestà Khàn had boasted, for a few weeks, paid a heavy amount for compensation to them out of his own pocket and opened the gate amid great pomp and rejoicings. The nawàb's joy was not, of course, absolutely unmixed, nor was that of those who knew the secret, genuine. But the people who were not in the secret coupled Sarfaraj's name for a time with Shaestà Khàn's in their prayers.

To what shifts men sometimes descend to gratify a dearly cherished wish !

A *THUG* STORY.

It is a story of the dark days when the Central and Northern India were infested by the strangling robbers, called the *thugs*, intended to show how strong sympathy and a paramount sense of a religious duty will sometimes subdue even in a careful man all considerations of personal safety.

A young and strongly built Moghul officer of a singularly noble bearing was on his way from the Punjab to Oudh. He crossed the Ganges near Meerut to pass through Muradabad and Barielly. He was well-armed, mounted on a strong Turki horse and attended by two servants also armed. He fell in with a small party of well-dressed and peaceful-looking Hindu way-farers who accosted him respectfully and modestly and begged to be allowed to travel under his escort so long as their way did not part from his, as the roads were, they said, unsafe. The officer told them to be off, go ahead or keep at a good distance behind, for he would have none of their company. They expressed their sorrow at his decision and fell in the rear.

The next day the same party overtook him on the road. But the Moghul was not sure if they were the same men, for they were dressed like poor Mussalmans. They humbly saluted him, as before, and talked of the *thugs* who infested the public thoroughfares, the necessity of all travellers who chanced to meet keeping together and their own solicitude to journey under the protection of any mounted and well-armed gentleman who might be going their way. The officer said not a word in reply; but he looked fiercely at the men and taking a pistol from his belt pointed it at them. So they hurried off ahead.

In the evening the cavalier put up in a road-side *serai* (inn) in which there were other travellers. He just noticed that some of them talked a great deal to his two servants and tried to be rather intimate with them. He reprimanded his servants and bade them mix with no strangers.

The following morning the Moghul officer overtook on the road these very strangers; they were only three, not as many as had solicited his escort on the two preceding days. They were in yellow clothes and seemed to be some sort of

pilgrims. The servants interceded for them with their master. But he was inexorable, would not allow them his protection. They lagged behind and were soon lost sight of.

On the next day when the officer and his two men had got to the middle of an extensive and uninhabited plain—the officer in advance and the men a few hundred yards behind—they came upon six men, Mussalman soldiers, who sat weeping by the side of a dead companion. They were, they said, on their way to Lucknow, their home, after a long and painful service, anxious to see their wives and children. Their companion, a young man, the hope and prop of his family, had died on the road. They had dug a grave for him under the trees hard by, but they were poor unlettered men unable to repeat the funeral service from the holy Koran. Would His Highness (meaning the Moghul officer) perform this last office to a co-religionist ? He would, not doubt, find his reward in this world and in the next. Here was an appeal which the Mussalman officer, notwithstanding all his resolve and his sternness, could not disregard. He dismounted. The body had been placed in the proper position with its head towards Mecca.

A carpet was spread. The officer took off his sword, his pistols, and his spear and laid them on it by his side ; called for water and washed his feet, hands and face that he might pronounce the holy text in a clean state. He then knelt down and began to repeat the funeral service in a clear, loud voice. Two of the soldiers knelt by him, one on each side, in silence. The other four went off and sat by the officer's servants at some distance, behind a cluster of trees.

All being now ready, the *Jhirni* (signal) was given by one of the two strong men who knelt by the officer's side by a loud groan as of mental agony and quick as a flash the handkerchiefs were thrown over the necks of the officer and his servants at the same instant, and at the next they were dead men. The Moghul fell a martyr to his sympathy and sense of religious duty.

THE RA'KHI-BA'NDHA' BAH'I.

(The bracelet-bound brother.)

IN the chivalrous ages, the knights of Europe did wonders to find favour in their ladies' eyes. The Indian knights did no less from the monarch on the throne to the cavalier who owned no other throne but the saddle (and no other sceptre but the lance).

The festival of the bracelet was a Rajput observance generally held in spring and it was the occasion of the most delicate gallantry between the fair sex and the cavaliers of India. It was only on an occasion of the utmost necessity and danger that the maiden or widow invested the knight with the bracelet—a token which conferred on him the title of her adopted brother and champion. While the bracelet, if accepted, as it almost always was, secured to the lady all the protection of a devoted champion, scandal itself never suggested any other tie but that of a brother to the devotion. He might hazard his life in her cause, yet never be favoured with a sight of her, never receive a smile in reward. There was a charm in the mystery of this con-

nection which used to bind the whole soul of the bracelet-bound brother and he seemed to find his guerdon in the public recognition of being the champion of a princess or a lady of high rank.

Bàhàdur, *sultan* (king) of Guzrat, invaded Mewar and bearing down all resistance marched up and invested the very walls of Chitore, the capital. Bikramjit, brother of the late *rana*, was regent of the state and ruled it for Udaya Singh, his infant son. Rajput valour was not wanting in the regent ; he did what he could, but he could not save the capital. It fell.

At this emergency, Karnavatee, the widowed queen, sent a *rakhi* to Humayoon, the Moghul Emperor of India, creating him thereby her brother and, as such, defender of her son and her honour and the integrity of the state. A Mussalman to champion a Hindu prince, one whose grandfather, *rana* Sangram Singh, had been the strongest enemy of his father, Baber, and had almost driven him back to Kabul! Nevertheless, the chivalrous emperor accepted the bracelet, and in token of acceptance sent her back, as was the custom, a *Katchli* (bodice) and immediately prepared to redeem his pledge. Nobly did he do so and nobly did he risk and,

for a time, lose his empire for doing so. For he was, when the *rakhi* was offered, fighting his bitterest and most tenacious enemies, the Pathans, in distant Bengal, had almost crushed them under their yet inexperienced leader, Sher Sha. But he abandoned his sure conquest in the peril of his adopted sister and her son and his state and hastened to Mewar leaving Sher Sha to reinforce himself and grow so strong as to be able to defeat him in battle after battle sometime afterwards, drive him into exile, seize his throne and reign in his place and, after his death, leave the throne to his son. The vicissitudes of the imperial throne are not, however, the theme of my story. I have only to tell that Humayoon nobly fulfilled his pledge, expelled the foe from Chitore and girt the infant *rana* with a sword captured from him.

SYMPATHY IN *EXCELSIS*

You have heard many stories of fellow-feeling in men of rank for the lowly. But the following will, perhaps, beat all record.

Our Vidyàsàgar was once walking home to Birsinha in Midnapore from Calcutta where he was Principal of the Sanskrit college. The distance by road could not be less than 40 miles. He had a servant with him who bore on his head his luggage and walked behind him. Vidyàsàgar was a strong man and a very fast walker ; indeed, he was a famous walker. He would leave his man with the load a full mile or a half behind him at times and would stop and sit by the roadside till he came up with him. While Vidyàsàgar thus rested, the servant could not ; for the occasion which necessitated the master's presence at home was urgent and he could not afford to lose time on the way by allowing the servant to halt. Yet he could not force the poor man on when at the third or fourth stage of the journey he looked at his fagged condition. So, what he did, you think ? He took up the luggage on his own shoulders and bade the man walk behind him unencumbered. The man obeyed very reluctantly and was ill at ease. How could he be otherwise being, as he was, a good servant who understood propriety of things ?

TRUTHFULNESS.

LET us ponder on the truthfulness of the subject of this story, admire it and imitate it. I have already spoken of him once in another book. I mean Devendra Nàth Tàgore, son of "Prince" Dwarakà Nàth Tàgore of Calcutta. Dwarakà Nath had extensive lands in five districts of Bengal, coal mines and a vast banking business. He counted his annual incomes by hundreds of thousands, but his expenditures by millions. By the bye, he had earned his title of "Prince" in Europe by his lavish expenditures. No wonder that at his death he left his son, Devendra Nàth, over head and ears in debt. The business was wrecked and so were the coal mines; and it was calculated that the liabilities were over ten times the annual rent of his lands. A portion of the latter was, however, so tied up that the creditors could not touch it. In the schedule of his inheritance which was made and read in a meeting of his creditors this portion was not mentioned and in the judicial enquiry which followed, Devendra Nàth was asked to answer on oath if the property entered in the list was all he possessed. To the astonishment and admira-

tion of every one present he answered, "No, I have some more land in the hands of some trustees. Though it is not liable to distraint for the debts, I freely offer it along with the rest." Further questioned, "Have you anything more?" he said he had a diamond ring of great value. Nothing but the strictest regard for truth required him to mention the ring about which nobody knew anything.

It is a satisfaction to know that his property was not brought to the hammer, but his creditors agreeing, arrangements were made for the payment of the debts out of the rents of his lands by annual instalments. Devendra Nàth was not dispossessed of anything, but he had to practise the strictest economy for over 15 years, for the debt was vast. Some idea of his rigorous self-denial may be extracted from the fact that while every common meal in his house had cost about Rs. 300 in his father's time, he spent no more than Rs. 20 on it in these years of all round retrenchment. He sorrowfully dismissed most of his servants of all ranks and degrees, sold off the carriages excepting one and the horses but a very few, and cut down root and branch the trappings of luxury. But he was happy in the consciousness of his uprightness.

A NURSE'S SACRIFICE.

PANNA, the Rajput nurse's loyal sacrifice is perhaps without a parallel in history. The story is this :—

She was *dhai* or nurse of Prince Udaya Singh, only about six years old, at the time when the event which I am going to narrate happened. He was heir to the throne of Mewar (Rajputana), but the nobles of the state had placed the supreme power in the hands of . Banabeer, his cousin, a natural son of his father's brother, stipulating expressly that he should rule only during Udaya's minority. The taste of supreme power, however, soon gave him such a passionate desire to retain it permanently in his own possession that he resolved to remove the young prince from his path by murder. But his design was not so secret as might be thought. One man, at least, the *beri*, the barbar who waited on the regent at meals, had sure knowledge of it and of the hand that was to commit the foul deed and the hour in which it was to be committed. He was loyal to his legitimate prince, brave and resourceful. But he could give the alarm to the nurse only a few minutes before the appointed

time. She was wofully shocked, but not confounded. In an instant she formed her plan to baffle the tyrant's purpose. She took up the sleeping prince softly in her arms and hid him in a large fruit-basket under layers of leaves and put her own son of the same age with the royal child in the latter's cradle and dimmed the lights in the room. Scarcely had she finished these arrangements when Banabeer himself entering, poniard in hand, inquired for the prince. The nurse's lips refused their office ; she could only point to the cradle and saw the murderous steel buried in her own infant's heart. She did not shriek nor did she weep, but stood still like a statue until the murderer had left the apartment. Then she took up the basket and handed it to the barber who waited for it outside a backdoor to carry it to a safe place without the city previously agreed upon in the hurried counsel between the two.

This done, Pànnà consecrated the remains of her child with her tears and had them burnt according to the rites of her religion. But it was given out and believed that they were those of the prince, heir to the throne of Mewar. She hastened after the barber as soon as she could

to take charge of him whom she had so nobly preserved nor left him until years afterwards he re-entered Chitore, the capital of his fathers, at the head of his nobles and over the dead body of the usurper and his would-be assassin.

Has history anything to show to match the nurse Pànnà's loyal self-sacrifice?

"THE FAITHFUL FORTY-FIVE."

"EVEN the darkest cloud has its silver lining." Granted the sepoy mutineers of 1857-58, taking them in the lump, were traitors to their salt, ferocious, bloodthirsty and all that; but there were men among them who almost redeemed the sepoy's lost reputation by their faithfulness, heroism and self-sacrifice.

All the three arms, infantry, cavalry and artillery, were represented in the barracks at the headquarters station of Irinpurah in Rajputana. The sepoys were Rajputs, Pathans and Bhils. They were not infected with the spirit of the rebellion till the middle of August, 1857; but when the Jodhpur legion marched up and came among them on the 21st of that month after having murdered their European officers in their beds at Anadra, they were soon induced to make common cause with them. Owing to the dearth of experienced officers which was the most curious fact of the Company's armies in India at the outbreak of the mutiny, only a lieutenant, Lieutenant Conolly, was in charge of the station. On the morning of the 22nd Conolly was startled by a tremendous uproar in the lines. He im-

mediately mounted his horse and rode down to the parade ground. One glance showed him that the mutineers from Anadra had completely succeeded in rousing the men and they were wild with excitement. Yet he appealed to them: —to the gunners, but they pointed their guns at him; to the horse and the foot, but they shouted abuse. Conolly then called out, as a last resource,—"Those who are still for the *Sircar* (the Company) come out and join me." Forty-five men rode over to him.

The lieutenant turned to retire for the time surrounded by these sepoys. But he was not allowed to do so unmolested. Attack upon attack was made on him, though in a desultory fashion, through all which he got off safely with the zealous help of his loyal men. Subsequently, while the rebellious troops plundered the town, Conolly gathered together the European residents of the place,—men, women and children—in the deserted cavalry lines which were night and day guarded by the faithful Fortyfive. It was, indeed, a terrible and trying position. The lines were soon invaded by an infuriated crowd. They summoned the guard to surrender the Europeans, whereupon a *rasaldar* (a squadron

commander), Abbas Ali by name, and another native officer, Abdul Ali, and the orderly, Makdun Baksh, came forward and taking off their turbans in a solemn manner declared to them that before they should offer violence to the English, they would have to pass over their bodies. Their resolute bearing had the desired effect. The mutineers whose primary object here at Irinpurah, at least, was plunder, not slaughter, turned away after firing a few random shots.

The faithful Forty-five did not rest until they had on the 24th August escorted the Europeans to Jodhpur where they were safe. It is not on record, but I trust that the loyal services of these men were adequately rewarded.

THE STRONG TIE OF HOME.

INDIANS are proverbially attached to their home, be it ever so poor. The direst misfortune suffered there do not alienate it; rather the memory of these the more endears it to their soul. Objects of nature about the home have worn a long familiar face and seem to fill in the heart the void made by the dear ones gone for good.

Major-General W. H. Sleeman once met in his rambles through Upper India a very poor Mussalman who lived in a hovel which had seen better days beside the trunk-road leading to Moradabad. The man was alone in the world and was just then mourning the death of his last son and child. He was a strongly built man, but looked prematurely gray. When the officer came upon him, he was sitting upon the road under a spreading tree seemingly taking some interest in the kids which were frisking about. One of the officer's attendants asked the man if he knew of a boy who could for a hire take a led-horse of the party to the town. The man answered loudly, he did not; and presently smiled at some capers of the kids. There was

something in the manner of the man which roused Sleeman's curiosity and he drew near and said, "Is there anything the matter with you ?" "Nothing, *Saheb*," answered the man. People of great sensibility, with hearts overcharged with sorrow, often appear cold and callous to those who seem to them to feel no interest in their afflictions. But the Englishman did. So, he said again sympathetically, "Well, you seem poor and without anything to do just now. You may come yourself to take my horse for a handsome tip, if, indeed, you know of no boy who can do the job. You have a family, have you not ? Your wife and children have to be fed ?" At this the man broke forth into loud sobs and the floodgates of his eyes opened. The most sensitive chord in his heart was touched. He wept for a while ; then recovering a little he related slowly through his tears that his last child, a hopeful youth, had been poisoned with ***dhutura*** (datura alba) three days before by professional poisoners for the sake of his new blanket and that he had lost his other children and wife one after another in the course of the previous five years. "*Saheb*," said the man, "I have none to call my own in the wide world now. I brought

up this son—my last child—with my own hands after his mother's death and he has been poisoned for the sake of the blanket !" The man cried as if his heartstrings would break. On being asked if he would leave the place and settle in another part of the country where he might earn good wages and live comfortably the rest of his life, the Mussalman said an emphatic no. It was impossible—it was not to be thought of—he said. "I will never" continued he, "quit the bones of my wife and my lost children which are all buried here. The dust of the place is dear to me, sacred to me. The trees in the house are dear too ; we planted them together and watered them together so long. *Saheb*, my most earnest wish now in life is that in death I may find my last resting place beside my beloved ones' graves and among the no less beloved trees."

THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN HEART.

THE godly man, or as we call him in India, the man-god teaches by acts which, though they are very hard of imitation by the common human being, do yet a great deal of good by furnishing the ideal to strive after.

Panth Bàbà, a *sadhu* or holy man, while bathing in the Ganges, saw a scorpion floating by. He took it by the hand and gently placed it on the bank to save it from drowning. For his pains he got his fingers stung by the reptile. The scorpion slipped into the water again and was again rescued by the *sadhu* who was a second time stung. The pain was, no doubt, sharp; but he looked as placid as ever. A man who had marked the Bàbà's doings said, "Father *sadhu*, I thought you had been too sufficiently rewarded for your first act of mercy to repeat it a second time." The *sadhu* answered, "My son, it is the nature of the scorpion to sting and it has stung me. Why should I fail to act after man's uncorrupted nature which is to be merciful to all living things?"

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was noticed and Lady Dufferin came in to him in the anteroom in a state of mind which can be better conceived than described. A petty magistrate in the service of the Government to insult the Viceroy's hospitality! But Abdul Jabbar explained his scruples so frankly,—that as a true Mussalman he could not sit at a table where food, pork for one thing, which was prohibited by the prophet, might be served or where clean food might be defiled, according to his strict notions, by contact with prohibited articles—that the lady more than excused him; she respected him for his conscientiousness and sat with him off and on till the dinner was over.

THE COST OF COURTESY.

"COURTESY costs nothing" say they. But sometimes it costs a great deal, as the following rather funny story will show. Those whose courtesy is inbred suffer the penalties of their good nature without a murmur ; nay, they enjoy them.

In his early youth Rabindra Nàth Tàgore lived a few years in London for education. While there, he once happened to be introduced to an elderly lady, widow of a high Anglo-Indian official who had died in India. An Indian friend had composed a memorial song on him in English and, strangely enough, set it to an Indian tune called *behag*. The absurdity of it could be perceived by those who heard it sung, but far more by the unfortunate being who was forced to sing it. Rabindra Nàth is a born singer next only to poet, and in his early years the melody of his voice charmed all who heard it. His acquaintance with the lady ripened rapidly and into a sort of affection on the part of the latter ; so that before it was many months old, she began to call him "Ruby" and subject him to her whims. One day she suddenly re-

quested young Tàgore to sing her the English memorial song in the Indian tune, that is, to do violence to his musical genius by an unnatural effort. Yet he committed this outrage on himself to please the lady. But the crux came when, not satisfied with her private gratification, she bade him sing it in company on several occasions. He was to render himself ridiculous in society; his sensitive nature always revolted. Yet he always strongly bore his feelings down and sang the hybrid song in a spirit which mourned the necessity of singing it far more than the widow mourned the occasion which led to its composition. And when at the end of the performance, he heard the audience say to him amidst suppressed titter, "Thank you very much. How interesting!" he perspired at every pore of his body in midwinter.

The climax was reached when Rabindra Nàth was invited by his elderly friend to a party in her house at which he arrived, unfortunately, too late by about two hours owing to a misadventure in the train;—the lady lived some miles from London. He arrived at about 10 in the evening. Nothing had passed his lips since 8 in the morning; he was famished and dead tired.

The lady only expressed her regret that he was late and the meal was over. The other guests were still in the house and it was proposed that they should have a dance before they parted. "Ruby," said the lady, "You shall be my partner" and seizing him by his inert hand sprang up. Ruby thanked her with a sickly smile—he would have been really grateful for a few mouthfuls of food, hot or cold. His sufferings during the performance that followed may be conceived, but he bore them all bravely, nay, seemingly enjoyed them. At the end of the dance the singing of the inevitable elegiac song! It might be thought the last straw on the ass's back. But, no, the Indian is patient to a proverb. Young Tagore sang it through and that under a very ludicrous condition—with his face towards the half-closed door of a room in which a sick lady abode for whose special benefit the poor guest suffered.

Such were the penalties which our poet of now world-wide fame had to pay for his courtesy which was a part of his nature.

OPPORTUNITIES AND WANT OF THEM.

FAKIR CHANDRA BANERJI of Bally (Howrah district, Bengal) was commissariat agent with the British force in Chitral. It operated in the depths of the mountainous country against the insidious enemy who hardly ever showed himself, but shot down man after man from the most unsuspected quarters and was off, no body could tell where, before a musket could be levelled at him ; and this at all hours of the day and night. He made no distinction between the combatant and the non-combatant man in the British camp, but impartially expended his powder and shot on both. Service in this campaign was particularly perilous ; no man's life was worth a day's purchase.

One morning as Banerji was issuing ration, the invisible enemy suddenly peppered at his open tent, and as a bullet whizzed by his ear grazing it and killed a soldier standing beside him, he exclaimed laughing, "Well purred, hill cat ; but you have spoiled my checking book !" A few drops of blood from his ear had fallen on the open pages. Now, this reminds me of the story of Junot, when he was only a private. As he was

writing an order dictated by Napolean, a cannon ball from the Austrian battery struck the ground before them and covered them and the paper with sand, whereupon the great marshal of France that was to be, cried out "Thank you, we shall want no more sand upon this page!" Napolean at once knew that he was true metal and promoted him step by step until under the empire Junot was a duke and a great marshal of France. Was Banerji's fearlessness less than Junot's? No; but while Junot availing himself of the opportunities offered and deservedly patronised rose to high ranks in his country, Banerji, for want of opportunities which could not be offered him and of patronage, died, as he had lived, an obscure man. But we in Bengal cherish his memory.

A NOBLE SACRIFICE.

A KING of ancient Athens deliberately provoked a quarrel and had himself killed in the scuffle that followed in the camp of the invading Spartans to save his state from destruction. An oracle had declared that the Spartans should be defeated and routed and the state saved if the king was killed. An Indian chief of the early days of the 19th century drowned himself to save his posterity from the dreadful scourge of a disease. This was Raghunath Rao I, raja of Jhansi in Central India. He was afflicted with leprosy. It is a malady which has its seat in the blood and descends from father to son and the son's son and to all the rest who come after. The Rào had called in the aid of the best physicians of his time he could think of, gone through many penances prescribed by the *Shastras* (sacred books) and visited all the shrines in India to please the gods for a cure; but nothing had availed him. Then some very learned divines suggested that he might remove all taint of the dreadful disease from the blood of his children—it was surely there—by taking the *samadhi*, that is, by drowning himself in the holy waters

of the Ganges. He believed them, went to Benares and drowned himself in the river at the city. This was a noble sacrifice to what Raghunàth had been taught by his spiritual teachers to consider a duty towards his family ; and all must admire the man's spirit though some may condemn the priestly teaching.

A PRUDENT AND CONSCIENTIOUS RAJA.

RAJA Abhoyànanda of Bijni in Assam was a wealthy nobleman owning extensive lands in the district of Goalpara and the hilly country at the foot of the Himalayas. He was an upright and generous man, kind and considerate to his tenants and good to all. He was, besides, a keen sportsman passionately fond of hunting big game—tiger, rhinoceros, elephant, and boar which abounded in his forest domains.

Once upon a hunting excursion he rested with his people at a spot not far from a village of his *rayats* (tenants). A servant brought him at dinner-time a fine, ripe jack fruit which was much before its season. The ràjà asked his servant where he had got it. The man answered that the *mandal* (headman) of the neighbouring village had brought it, he knew not from where. "Well, ask the *mandal* to look in" said the master.

The *mandal* questioned submitted that he had got it from Dhaniràm, one of his lordship's *rayats*.

"Did you take it or buy it ?"

The man hesitated for a moment before he

answered :—"He made a loyal present of it to you, master."

The ràjà smiled. Evidently he did not believe the man. He knew it had been taken by force. So, he desired the presence of Dhaniràm at the camp.

An officer of the ràjà was heard a little while after to remark to a fellow-officer and a number of servants that the ràjà made such a fuss about such a trifle ! What was a poor jack fruit worth that he should spend his breath on it ? Such scruples !

The nobleman who overheard him answered him from behind the curtain, "Dear sir, if I were to accept every so-called present made to me by my tenants, they would have little left to themselves through your zealous activities ; and gifts would flow not only to me, but also to all of you."

When Dhaniràm, the tenant, came in bowing in answer to his summons, he said, of course, under instruction, that he had made a free and loyal gift of the fruit. The ràjà said, "Dhaniràm, I am pleased to accept it as such ; but you must also accept a present from me. Here is a muslin *chadar* (sheet) for you."

KANTA, THE FRIEND OF WARREN HASTINGS.

KANTA, the founder of the Cossimbazar Raj family, was a grocer in the bazar of his native village when Warren Hastings escaping from Nawàb Sirajuddowlah's dungeon sought shelter in his house. He hid him during the day, fed him and rested him and in the night helped him to escape to Calcutta. When Warren Hastings was made Governor, he remembered his humble benefactor and bestowed on him extensive *zamindaries* or leases of land in several districts of Bengal and also appointed him his *mutsuddi* or agent. He admitted him, by and by, into such intimacy with himself that he would sometimes take counsel with him and allow himself to be guided by him. Kànta was a very worthy man, wise and brave.

He accompanied Hastings to Benares in his mission to or expedition against Chait Singh. It is a well-known fact of history that that prince was very roughly handled, that he offered an ineffectual resistance and that he was at last forced to fly for his life. His treasury was plundered. The booty was large, but Hastings's

hunger for gold was apparently insatiable. His soldiers invaded the *zenana*—the quarter of the palace where the ladies of the family lived. But here Kànta interfered ; he would not allow these brutal men, whom the taste of blood and rapine had roused to a frenzy, to molest the women. Alone he stood at the closed gate of the *zenana* and loudly bade the soldiers stop and retire and not force it. He was well-known as Mr. Hastings's friend. Some of the men hesitated ; but by far the larger number were inclined to defy him. At this emergency he sent a hasty message to Hastings begging him earnestly to spare the ladies and the sacred *zenana*. Hastings yielded and the messenger returned quickly with orders from him in compliance with Kànta's request.

Thus did Kànta not only save the ladies from outrage and spoliation but also his friend, Hastings, from another count of charge in his subsequent impeachment at the bar of the Lords.

Kànta has richly deserved all his fame among men.

A PRINCESS'S MODESTY.

In a country where every Mussalman of any station in life—Pathan, Turk or Moghul—would have the richest tomb his means could afford to cover his remains, a country which boasts thousands of magnificent mausoleums headed by the incomparable Tajmahal of Agra, a wonder of the world, the modesty in this respect of Jahanara Begum, a daughter of the Emperor Shajahan, has found a very honourable mention in the history of India. She was a profound scholar, a poetess, a politician and devoted to her unfortunate brother, Dara Shikoh, and her father, Shajahan. She died at Delhi in 1682. She had expressed her wish to be buried without pomp and state, to have a green carpet of grass upon her grave and nothing but the plainest stone to mark the spot. Accordingly, her remains were placed under a plain marble slab, hollow at the top and exposed to the sky; the hollow was filled with earth covered with green grass. She had written her own epitaph—at least, the first three lines of it—and it was inscribed on the tomb:

Let no rich canopy cover my grave.

The grass is the best covering for the poor in spirit.
The humble, the transitory Jahanara,
The disciple of the holy man of Chistie,
The daughter of the Emperor Shajahan.

In humility Murshid Kuli Khan, a *nawab* of Bengal, is said to have surpassed even this princess. He left an injunction that after his death he should be buried at the foot of the stairs leading up to the *Musjid* (house of worship) so as to be trampled on twice or thrice daily by the true believers going into it to pray.

NONE ALTOGETHER DEVOID OF GRACE.

No man, however depraved, can be altogether devoid of grace. Even Nero, who is said to have fiddled while Rome burnt, had some amiable traits of character. Teachers of men, pastors or pedagogues, should not, therefore, despair and give up their endeavours to reform and raise a soul as altogether irreclaimable. This is by the way. What I am directly concerned with in this story is the behaviour of *Nawab* Serajud-dowlah of Bengal immediately before his arrest by Mirjafar, his villainous rival's men. He has been credited with all sorts of sins and crimes in stories written of him by his enemies and even now his memory causes a shudder in some like the Emperor Nero's.

But even this man, Serajuddowlah, was capable of passionate love and of sacrificing himself for those whom he loved ; and he actually sacrificed himself. Flying from the fatal field of Plassy he rested only a few hours in his capital; then fled again with his dearest wife and his only child, a daughter, in a boat up the Ganges. In his hurry no store of food or drink was taken in the boat and before many hours were over,

the child began to cry for food and the wife to look anxious. A whole day passed thus. The *nawab* could not allow the speed of the boat to slacken, far less to let it be anchored, for he feared a hot pursuit, while landing on either bank could not be thought of. Yet he could bear the misery of his wife and child no longer. He resolved to risk all for them. Ordering the boat to proceed with unabated speed, he landed in the disguise of a rustic on the bank opposite Rajmahal near the cell of a dervish. Thirteen months before this dervish had been deprived of his ear by the order of the fugitive tyrant, and he had good reason to remember the nawab's person and recognised him through his disguise. He received the fugitive who begged for some food courteously and setting about to prepare a dish of *kicherry* (rice and pulse boiled in butter) for him, he privately sent off a man across the river to inform the people who, he knew, were looking for the *nawab*. They soon came over, and seized the prince, and carried him to Murshidabad where he was killed under circumstances of barbarous cruelty by order of his successful rival, Mirjafar.

COLOUR PREJUDICE.

THOSE who have not come in actual contact with people of a different colour can hardly conceive how deep in the human heart the prejudice of colour is. It is very difficult to overcome; more so, if the people of the different colour happen to be politically inferior.

The Rev. K. M. Banerji was a man of profound western and eastern learning, a sound philosopher, and an eloquent Christian preacher. Yet he was not allowed to preach in the European churches in Calcutta. He was given a church of his own on the bank of the Hedua tank in the Indian quarter of the town in which Indian Christians congregated. Now, Professor Rochfort had heard of the intellectual and moral greatness of the man in London and when he came to India, he was anxious to hear him pray and preach. So, one day he walked straight but stealthily into Banerji's church—it was so degrading for a white man to be seen in a brown man's place of worship—though it was Christian worship!—and—let me relate the rest in the professor's own words:—"I sat down on a bench and resolutely shut my eyes lest the colour of

the preacher should prejudice me against his preaching. I listened to a sermon not in any way less delicious and edifying than the best I had heard anywhere in England."

So much for Professor Rochfort. Even gentle Lamb said that he could not bring himself to think of his kinship with the black man.

KRISHNA CHANDRA AND THE ROBBERS.

WE have heard of men who keep all the sweetness of their heart, even the cardinal virtues of truth and mercy for the people of their own sect, or set or race. They are not really good men whose examples may be followed. Our Krishna Chandra Pal Chaudhury was truthful and merciful even to *dacoits* who would rob him. Here is the story :--

The gentleman was a prince among merchants and had his place of business in Calcutta and home at Ranaghat between which two places he travelled by boat up and down the Hughli ; for in those days there were no railways in this country. The times were troublous. The traces of the anarchy attendant on the breakdown of the Mussalman power were still visible. The East India Company's police, such of them as there were, had not yet learned their duties, and people's lives and properties were unsafe on account of the robbers who infested land and water. Pàl-Chaudhury's small travelling boat was one night attacked on the river by some of a notorious gang of robbers whose name inspired terror in young and old in those days. There was little in the boat worth taking ; but suspect-

ing there was valuable property hidden somewhere the miscreants fell upon the merchant's men and soon overpowered them. Pàl-Chaudhury who had been asleep in his cabin was roused by their cries and hastened to the men's rescue. But he found further resistance impossible.

"I am Krishna Chandra Pàl-Chaudhury of Ranaghat" said he.

"We know you, sir," said one of the robbers coming forward and bowing to the wealthy merchant whom every one knew.

"Leave my men and the boat and call on me at my office some day next week ; I shall pay you for your forbearance." The robbers believed him—all who knew him believed him—and left the boat.

This event was soon known to the merchant's people at home and Calcutta some of whom advised him not to pay but to hand over whoever among the robbers should call on him to the police. He rejected the advice. He must keep his word, though pledged to robbers, and while they were at his house at his own invitation, they were his guests and he could not harm them. In fact, he paid the robbers who came and dismissed them without setting any snares for them.

PANCH JUTI.

THE great Indian diamond, Kohinoor, has an exciting history of its own. India is said to be the brightest jewel in the crown of the British sovereign. This is not only metaphorically, that is, politically true, but also literally. The diamond is in the British monarch's own crown and it is really the brightest jewel on earth.

It was found in the mine of Kollur on the Krishna river in southern India and presented by Mir Jumla to Shajahan, the Emperor of Delhi. Nadir Shah, the Alexander of Persia, won it by his sword from Mahammad Shah, a degenerate descendant of Shajahan. The conqueror's grand son, Sha Rukh, was forced to yield it to Ahmed Shah Abdali who had carved for himself the kingdom of Afghanistan. Shah Shuja, a grandson of Ahmed Shah, took it from a crevice in the walls of the prison-house of Shah Zaman, his eldest brother who had been deposed, blinded, and thrown into prison by another brother of his, Mahammad Shah. This prince was deposed in his turn by Shah Shuja and saved himself by surrendering Kohinoor to him. Ranjit Singh, the lion of the Punjab, beat Shah Shuja in battle

and had the diamond for the richest part of his spoil of war. After the third Sikh war when the Punjab was annexed to the British dominions, the conquerors also appropriated the diamond from Dulip Singh, Ranjit's son, and it passed on to Queen Victoria through Sir John Lawrence's capacious waistcoat pocket in which it ran for a time the risk of being forgotten.

But the cream of my story is in the answer which the Lion of the Punjab gave to a person who had ventured to ask him about the price of Kohinoor. Beating with the shoe (*juti*) is the severest, because the most humiliating, infliction known in India. *Panch* is five. *Panch Juti* means beating five times with the shoe, that is, giving a severe thrashing. "Your Majesty, what may be the price of your Kohinoor?" asked the person.

"*Panch Juti*" answered Ranjit.

Truly, the most valuable earthly possessions have not been bought with money, but always won by the mightier sword.

———

HANUMANT SINGH.

On the troops, six companies of the 1st Oudh Irregulars, mutinying at Saloni on the 10th June, 1857, the officers fled from the station and reached in safety the fort of Daraopur in the possession of a Rajput chief, Raja Hanumant Singh of Kalakankar. This nobleman had been dispossessed by the action of the revenue system introduced by the British of the greater part of his property. Although he keenly felt the tyranny and the disgrace, he yet declined to look upon the fugitives as other than men in distress who had sought his protection. He readily extended it to them forgetting for the nonce that he had been almost ruined by their nation. He fed them, and rested them, and helped them to join the British army headquarters at Lucknow. But when at parting Captain Barrow, one of the fugitives, expressed a hope that he (Hanumant Singh) would help to put down the mutiny, he lifted up his head like the lion whose tail has been twisted, as he replied, "*Shahib*, your countrymen came into this country and drove out our king. You sent your officers round the districts to examine our titles to our fathers' estates. At one

blow you took from me lands which from time immemorial had been in our family. I had to submit. Sudden misfortune has fallen upon you. The people of the land have risen against you. You came to me whom you despoiled. I have saved you. But now—now I march at the head of my retainers to Lucknow to try to drive you from the country."

Impolitic but brave and outspoken Hanumant!

A WIFE' LOVE.

It is not always that a loving heart is shown by an act of sensational self-sacrifice. An opportunity for such may not come in a life-time. But as even a straw can clearly indicate the direction of the wind or a ray of light through a chink in the wall prove the presence of the shining sun in the sky, so a little act or word or gesture, unnoticed by the dull, reveals to the keen student of man the temper of the heart.

*Sreematee** Saudàminee Devee lived with her husband at Monghyr in the closing years of the last century. There was a sad day of bereavement in their young lives in this town the day of the death of a beloved little daughter. The husband buried the child on the banks of the Ganges and returned home to find his wife lying on the ground in a state of semi-unconsciousness from grief. She looked at her husband at his approach and the first words she faintly uttered were to say, "Husband, your feet are bare, you will catch cold ; put on your slippers." This from a woman who was still in a paroxysm of grief ! She had drowned for a moment the

* *Sreematee* is Mrs. in English.

thought of the loss of her child in her anxiety for the health of her husband.

Now, the above is not much of a story ; but with Wordsworth be it said :—

O reader ! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thoughts can bring,
O gentle reader ! you would find
A tale in everything.

Saudàminee Devee's husband was full and, was sure, would be full of it till his dying day and could not tire of telling it.

— ——

AKBAR'S COMPLAISANCE.

ALTHOUGH the Emperor Akbar's obligations to Fakeer Sheikh Selim, the holy man of Fatehpur Sikri, were great for his spiritual ministrations and for his prayers which, it was believed, had got the Emperor an heir to the throne, yet his complaisance to the man was extraordinary, as is shewn in the following story :

The site and scenery of Fatehpur Sikri so delighted the emperor that he resided there for rather long at a time. He was, of course, attended by his whole court and troops of soldiers, and a great many other people. They created a noise and bustle which the holy man could with difficulty bear. Then when Akbar proposing to set up a capital in the place began to surround it with regular fortifications, he could stand it no longer. He interviewed the emperor and said, "Son, either you or I must leave Fatehpur Sikri."

Akbar—"Why so, father ?"

The fakeer—"A poor man of God who wishes for nothing more than seclusion and repose cannot live in the vicinity of an imperial court."

Akbar—"I see ; I must go then ; must on no account disturb you."

He immediately ordered the dismantling of the fortifications and the removal of the court to Agra.

A SHORT HOMILY TO A WIFE.

SOME of our Indian faiths, Hindu and Islamic, are sublime. There are those who may question their soundness, but of their nobility there can be no question. One of these is—that God gives or takes away from us for a certain purpose of His own in which our own interests may be only of very subordinate importance.

Babu Harihar Ghosh was a pleader at the district courts of Faridpur in Bengal and at his station was the most earning lawyer of his day. But his charity was so great that not a pice was saved at the year's end. His house was the largest place of free entertainment in the town where poor men seeking service or business, poor traders, poor students, distant relatives in reduced circumstances,—in short—all sorts of men without a proper sense of self-respect—flocked and found an ungrudging asylum. He could not say *no* to anybody nor did he care to say it. But not of the same clay was his wife made. She fretted at her husband's charities which she called extravagance and dinned it day and night in his ear that he was laying by nothing for a rainy day nor for his children after him, but

wasting hardwon money by feeding a whole world of useless mouths. But Harihar, like the famous Rip Van Winkle of Irving, only shrugged his shoulders and let the admonition pass. Money flowed in and, as always before, flowed out quickly leaving him *high*, indeed, and dry.

One day the careful wife sought to take the direction of affairs into her own hands. In the absence of her husband from home he told the crowd of unbidden guests in the house to clear off within three hours. These men were taken aback ; but as the orders came from the mistress of the house herself, there was no help for it but to pack up and leave. Ghosh returned from his labours, as usual, in the evening and greatly wondered on the threshold of his house at the silence and deserted appearance of it. It looked like a hive from which the bees had flown away. His wife was, however, at hand who soon relieved him of his astonishment by telling him of the dispersion of the vagabonds at her command, and she spoke so firmly and looked so hard at him that for a while the pleader, elsewhere so eloquent, found no voice at all to tell her his opinion of her conduct. When, at last, he did, the lady

silenced him quickly with —"Well, what I have done I have done. If you want them to return, they will, but I shall leave the house for good." No further discussion was possible after this.

The next day the lawyer argued his cases at the bars with his usual ability, but he lost most of them and returned home in the evening with very light pockets. The next day, and the day after, and on several days following they were lighter still. The careful wife noted the circumstance and was uneasy. Then did Harihar Bàbu say, "Wife, it is possible that God blessed my practice that it might be a blessing more to others than to our own selves. Nay, I am sure that it was so. Now that you have foiled His purpose by your late act, He seems to have withdrawn His favour from me. My practice does not thrive now. You think too much of to-morrow; can't you leave it to Him who cares for all?"

The dependants were asked to return to the house as soon as this homily was heard and digested.

THE HUMBLE STUDENT.

In olden days when the printing press was not known and books were all manuscripts and few and rare, instruction was mostly received from the mouth of the professor and, therefore, seekers after learning all went to him and lived with him.

Old Ràmkrishna Bàchaspati of Sylhet in Assam was a learned man and head of a school of his own. When the great Raghunàth Siromoni of Nudia, Bengal, rose to eminence for his learning and his fame spread over all India, Ràmkrishna dismissed his school and sped to Nudia and placed himself under the tuition of the young *pundit*. His parting words to his own pupils were, "Go, seek another *guru* (teacher) for yourselves. As for me, I am going to drink at a fountain far deeper and purer than you have tasted of here."

Earnest seekers after knowledge or wisdom are always modest and humble ; no sacrifice is too great for them for the attainment of their noble end, even the sacrifice of rank or position.

JUDGING OTHERS.

MAN judges other men by his own heart and finds it hard to conceive that they could act otherwise than he himself would have acted under particular circumstances or upon particular occasions.

Kabir, the founder of a religious sect in Northern India, was once kicked down into a road-side well by a violent man whose foot he had accidentally trodden on. The violent man having committed this violent act took no further notice of his victim than he would have taken of a dead rat and went his way. Another man who came up to the spot a little time after was drawn to the well by Kabir's groans and pulled him up with great difficulty. The man happened to be an acquaintance of Kabir's. When rescued, the latter lay like one dead. Sense returned gradually with much nursing. To test whether it had returned, the acquaintance asked Kabir if he could tell who he (the rescuer) was. Kabir answered faintly, "Are you not the man who kicked me into the well? You were angry, my dear; but now you are so sorry and are doing so much to bring me round!"

A MOTTO GROSSLY ABUSED.

WHEN the Imperial Hall of Private Audience (*Dewan-I-Khas*) was built at Delhi, Saad-ulla-khan, a great poet of the time, composed a motto for it, the most rapturous ever penned:—

"If there be a paradise on the face of the earth, it is here—it is here—it is here." It was inscribed in letters traced by Rashid, a famous caligraphist, over a side-arch within the hall.

Now listen to some of the uses to which this paradise on earth was put. Here sat Auranzebe when he ordered the assassination of his brothers, Dara and Murad, and the imprisonment and destruction by slow poison of his own son, Muhammad, who had often fought bravely by his side. Here also sat he when his nephews, Dara's sons, the graceful Suliaman and the brave Sipar Shikoh, stood before him in chains to be shut up in a dungeon and soon afterwards done away with. Here was Emperor Shajahan the Magnificent insulted by his grandson—a son of Aurangzebe—to whom, in return, he offered his throne, if only to disappoint the youth's father—to spite him. Here Mahammad Shah, a degenerate descendant of Baber, bandied compli-

ments and sipped coffee with his ferocious Persian conqueror, Nadir Shah, who had destroyed his armies, plundered his treasury, stripped his throne, and ordered the murder of a hundred thousand of the helpless inhabitants of his capital, and both swore to the most deliberate lies in the name of their God, Prophet, and the Koran.

Was a motto ever more atrociously belied than the one on the arch of the hall ? Was the hall, scene of such barbarities, a paradise or what ? Man's evil passions have often proved stronger than his piety and benevolence or so many instances of sacrilege and violation of justice in courts of justice and vandalism had not been recorded in history and biography.

PRESENCE OF MIND.

RETURNING to the drinking of coffee by the conqueror and the conquered in the "earthly paradise" mentioned in the preceding story, I shall tell another to illustrate the great presence of mind of one of Emperor Muhammad Shah's courtiers. It saved the courtier from imputation of cowardice or, perhaps, from instant execution.

Coffee was called for and it was brought in upon a gold salver by the most polished gentleman of the court. His motions, as he entered the gorgeous apartment amidst the splendid trains of the two emperors, were watched with great anxiety. If he presented the drink first to his own master, the furious conqueror, before whom the sovereign of India and all his court trembled, might order him to instant execution ; if he presented it to Nadir first, it would be insulting his own sovereign out of fear of the stranger, and he would be branded ever after as a traitor "to his salt" and coward. To the astonishment of all he walked up with a steady step to his own master. "I cannot," said he, "aspire to the honour of presenting the cup to the great emperor, Your Majesty's honoured

guest, nor would your Majesty wish that any hand but your own should do so."

The Emperor took the cup from the gold salver and presented it to Nadir Shah who said with a smile, as he took it, "Had all your officers done their duty like this man, you had never, my good cousin, seen me and my army at Delhi. Take care of him for your own sake and get around you as many like him as you can."

THE CHARACTER OF A FREE GIFT.

THE late Bàbu Ràm Charan Basu's spiritual adviser was Bàlànanda Swamee of Benares. One cold season the gentleman presented his master with a woollen shawl of good quality and great value. The latter accepted it with apparent gladness and put it on. That very day he met a poor woman shivering with cold in his rambles through the city and immediately transferred the piece of cloth to her shoulders. When sometime afterwards Ràm Charan Bàbu finding his *guru* without any protection from the weather inquired about what he had done with the shawl, the *guru* sharply asked, "Did you give me the shawl to carry it as your porter?" "Oh no, reverend sir, no," answered the disciple. "Then why did you ask?" retorted the great man. His idea of a gift apparently was that the recipient should be free to make whatever use he pleased of it just as God's gift of free will to man is unconditional.

SMOKING AN UNTOUCHABLE'S *HOOKAH*.

THOSE who know how firmly rooted caste prejudices are in the heart of the Hindu can appreciate the strength of mind which our Vivekànanda showed in the event narrated in this story. He was convinced of the utter unreason of the distinction made between man and man owing to accident of birth and of the contempt with which the inferior castes are treated and of the disabilities to which they are subjected. Yet he found it so hard to overcome a bias bred in the bone.

Once while travelling through Northern India on foot he came upon a man of the "untouchable" *methar* (scavenger) caste smoking his *hookah* on the road side. "Will you let me smoke your *hookah*?" begged Vivekànanda. The man reverentially stood up and with his head bent said, "Alas, *Maharaj* (great man), I am a *methar*." Vivekànanda shrugged his shoulders at this; the prejudices of many centuries asserted themselves suddenly in him and for the time carried him oft his feet. But he regained his reason before he had walked forward many yards, and then he ran back to the man and said, "Brother *methar*, I shall smoke your *hookah*; let me have it." And he smoked it.

A DIVINE WOMAN.

THERE are women among us whose hearts seem to have been purged of all that is gross, rough and mean. Nothing is left behind but selfless love and tenderness. Such angels would do all and suffer all for their beloved and much for kith and kin and neighbours, and even strangers, always silently and unostentatiously and never think that they have done more than their bare duty.

One such angel was Sreematee Basantabàlà Devee of Gala in the Mymensingh district of Bengal—a young woman for whose love the human world about her was not sufficient scope, but it flowed over to beasts and birds. She had a tear, pure as the dew of heaven, for a missing cat or for pigeons which had not been given their allowance of grain by an oversight. Her heart bled to think of motherless babies. Once upon a day she heard a poor low caste woman of her village say that a young woman, relative of hers, was dead and that her little baby was in a sad plight for want of suck. Basantabàlà's eyes moistened to think of it. She was eager to help the baby to the best of her ability. But it could

not be brought such a distance to her house nor could she, a lady who observed the *purdah* according to immemorial custom, walk to the hut where it lived. So not to forego her benevolent purpose, she milked herself, though she had a baby at her own breast, into a phial, corked it, and sent it for the motherless one! This she did day after day until the necessity for it no longer existed. Was not Basantabàlà a divine woman, if love can raise womanhood to divinity?

A TRAITOR'S EXPIATION.

Alone among the princes of Rajputana the *rànas* of Mewar held aloft the crimson banner of independence from father to son against the Pathan and Moghul emperors of Delhi.

"——————————————preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp,"

though they suffered for it as no princes ever did before or after, driven from their ancient capital, Chitore, forced to fly from one mountain fastness to another, finding shelter from the inclemencies of weather in caves and hollows of trees, eating their royal meals of wild fruits and roots off *pateras* of leaves, sleeping in beds of grass, holding courts under spreading trees, but yet under all privations fighting to preserve unsullied the glory of their house with the determination of the Greek at Thermopylæ or the Roman at Cannæ. They were beat and broken oftener than they won; but Emperor Jehangir was alarmed at the pertinacity of Rànà Amar Singh, worthy son of a worthy father and felt deeply mortified at that the sons of Bappa Rawal (the princes of Mewar) still held their proud heads erect among so many

other Hindu kings who all had bent theirs and held their states as fiefs of the Moghul empire, and served in its cabinets and armies. To force in the field the emperor now added crafty policy. He picked up a traitor, Sagar Singh, an uncle of Amar Singh, who had abandoned his country's cause and attached himself to the Moghul court and set him up at Chitore, the deserted capital, as *rana* of Mewar. He thought that he would by this means create division in the patriot camp and some, at least, of Amar Singh's adherents would come over to the new *rana* who, protected by Moghul arms and supplied with Moghul gold, lived in ignoble security and pomp amidst the ruins of an once glorious capital. For seven years Sagar had a spurious and scanty homage paid to him amidst the desolation, the fallen pride of his ancestors. Very few of the patriot king's adherents deserted his standard for his. But it is gratifying to note that not even upon this recreant son of Mewar the silent admonitions of the ruins of the columns, arches, pillars, temples and gates erected by his fathers in past days in commemoration of their victories over the enemies of their country, their religion or their house were lost. They were a perpetual

memento of his infamy. Nor could he pass through one finger's breadth of Chitore's ample surface without treading on some fragment which reminded him of his ancestors' great deeds and his own unworthiness. Seven years of compunctious visitings of conscience at last animated him to an act of redeeming virtue. He boldly got over the fears of imperial displeasure and sending for his nephew restored Chitore to him and himself retired to the isolated rock town of Kandhar.

Some time after, upon going to court he was upbraided by the emperor with what he called treason. "Yes, treason" said Sagar, "but not to thee, *Toork*,* but to my country, my race and my religion for which may Bhairab, our god, accept my expiation!" wherewith he drew his dagger and stabbed himself through the heart.

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* Turk or Moghul.

A WONDERFUL COMBINATION.

How largely people can combine and act by one common impulse, when they are thoroughly roused by acts of injustice done to them is shown in a portion of a minute written by Sir Peters Grant, a former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

"On my return a few days afterwards," writes Sir Peters, "along the Kumar and the Kaliganga from dawn to dusk, as I steamed down the rivers for some 60 or 70 miles, both banks were literally lined with crowds of men claiming justice in this matter. Even the women of the villages were collected in groups by themselves. I do not know that it ever fell to the lot of any Indian official to pass for 14 hours between lines of suppliants for justice. All were most respectful and orderly, but also were painfully in earnest."

The demonstration was called forth by the high-handed ways of the British indigo planters in Bengal in the fifties of the last century. The villagers triumphed over their oppressors in the end. The planters had to pack up and leave the country. A strong combination against an undoubted wrong always succeeds.

RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION.

THOSE who are the very soul of honesty and truth feel pained and offended at the faintest suspicion of the opposite vices in them. The late Devendra Nàth Tàgore, the father of our world-poet, Rabindra Nàth, has been canonised in India—is mentioned as *saint* Devendra Nàth. While he lived, he lived unsoiled by the impurities of the world. Here is a story about him told by his great son.

Father and son were travelling by rail to the Himalayas. At a large station on the roadside a ticket-checker looked at the son's travelling ticket which was a half-ticket because the boy was under twelve, and looked at the boy who perhaps seemed to be too big for his age. But he did not dare voice his suspicion. He left the compartment only to return to it presently with the station-master who mastered courage to ask Devendra Nàth "Is your boy under twelve?" "Yes, he is" answered the saintly Tàgore. "I should rather think—" began the station-master again, but before he could finish his sentence, Devendra Nàth threw him a currency note which far more than covered the yet unexpressed

demand which the officer would make for the price of a full ticket. The station-master took it and returned the balance in a handful of silver and copper. Every vein in Devendra Nàth's ample forehead was swollen with indignation. He clutched at the coins and flung them all through the carriage-window on the pavement to roll out in all directions he cared not where.

AN INCONSISTENCY.

THERE is a school of thought in India which attributes all human actions, good, bad or indifferent to God's direct agency. Its gospel is in the verse :—

"I know what a pious deed is, but I feel no inclination to it ;
I know what a sin is, but I have no aversion to it ;
Thou that art in my heart, O God, promptest all my actions,
And I do what thou leadest me to."

The doctrine ignores freedom of will in man altogether. Even as it is, there are people who are neither logical nor consistent in their practice of it and often reduce themselves to an absurd position as the subject of the following story, Haladhar De of Sylhet (Assam), did.

A calf trespassing into his kitchen-garden and eating some plants therein, he was wrath and hurled a short thick cudgel at it which, striking it at the head, felled it. The man, a Hindu, was horrified, for it was one of the blackest sins for a Hindu to kill a cow, and exclaimed in the perturbation of his mind, "Hari, my God,

what hast thou done !" But the calf was not killed ; it got upon its legs in a few minutes and tottered out of the garden. Ràmdàs Siromani, a pundit, who stood by and had heard the man's exclamation said in a casual way, "Brother, who built this house ?"—pointing to the man's house. Haladhar answered, "I."

"Who had this fish-pond dug ? Was it your late father ?

"No, I."

"Who laid out this beautiful garden ?"

"Myself, sir."

Then the wise pundit remarked smiling, "It seems, brother, that you did everything about here, only it was poor God who (as you thought) killed the calf !"

In quite a different spirit did Baber exclaim at the victorious termination of his second battle of Tirouri—"Not to me but to thee, oh Allah, belongs the glory of this victory !"

THE CHILD IS FATHER OF THE MAN.

"THE child is father of the man." Sakta Singh was a prince of Mewar. Here is a story about him when he was only five years old. The armourer having brought in a new dagger, its edge was tried, as was customary, on thinly spread cotton ; whereupon the little prince asked his father, "Is not a dagger intended to cut flesh and bone with ?" and receiving an answer in the affirmative, he seized it and tried it on his own little hand. Blood gushed from the wound and wetted the carpet, but the boy betrayed no symptom of pain or surprise.

Sakta's youth and manhood were in full conformity with the fearlessness now displayed. From the time his hand could wield a sword or lance to the time when that hand was numbed in death he never laid it aside. The Rajput was war-like ; Sakta was a Rajput of Rajputs.



PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP.

Ablution before worship is insisted on by the Jewish, the Islamic and the Hindu laws. The body, the temple of the soul, must be cleansed and purified before the latter is sought to be brought in contact and communion with God. The Hindu *shastras* go farther. Food and drink, however harmless, are material and gross, and burden the body and defile the soul with their vapours. So "creature comforts" must not be taken before worship.

Bàbu Ràmtanu Làhiri was one of Bengal's most pious men in the last century. One morning as he sat in his room with his morning cup of tea smoking before him on the table, a friend came in with a gentleman who was a famous singer of devotional songs. Lahiri's soul delighted in nothing more than in such songs and he begged the gentleman to sing him one. The latter began humming a tune at once, upon which Lahiri hastily rose from his seat. "Not so soon, my dear sir, not so soon," cried he, "I am not yet ready." He then had the tea removed from the room, sat for a few minutes quietly with his eyes shut and then again stood

up, his head bent and his hands folded on his breast, and remained so in the meekest attitude until the song which had been begun with his standing up was finished. A spiritual condition must be induced in the soul so that it may profit by spiritual ministrations.

A PILGRIMAGE OF LOVE.

A VERY fine instance of the love which rules in an Indian family and of the faith of the Hindus in religious vows and their fulfilment is afforded by the following conversation which took place between General Sleeman and a young Hindu soldier of 25, the eldest son of an old jemàdar in the British service.

Sleeman—"What was the vow and who took it and why?"

The young man—"The vow was to pour eight basketfuls of holy Ganges water drawn from the stream at Hardwar on the heads of the gods Baijnath at Deoghur and Jagannath at Puri. It was taken by all the members of our family—father, mother, my wife and myself—for the recovery of my younger brother, about 12 years of age, who was very ill."

"Was he really very ill when you set out?"

"Very ill sir, hardly able to stand without assistance."

"What was the matter with him?"

"It was what we call a drying-up or withering of the system; dysentery was the most conspicuous symptom."

"The vow having been fulfilled, your brother recovered ?"

"He had quite recovered, sir, before we set out on our return journey."

"Who carried the baskets of water ?"

"My parents, wife and myself. Each carried two baskets fixed to the ends of a pole, which was thrown across the shoulder. The water was in small bottles deposited in the baskets."

"What was the route you took in the pilgrimage ?"

"We travelled from home (Jabbalpore) northward to Hardwar, from there to Bindhyachal on the Ganges, thence south-eastward to Deoghur and, lastly, from there due south to Puri."

"How did you travel ?"

"All on foot excepting little, sick brother who rode a small pony which had been in the family for many years."

Here were four members of a respectable family, old and young, men and women, walking on a pilgrimage of between 12 and 14 hundred miles (going and coming) and carrying burdens on their shoulders for the recovery of the poor sick boy. Father, mother, brother and brother's wife—none seemed to love the child less than

another, for whom each underwent ungrudgingly the fatigues of a long—long journey on foot. The change of air and exercise cured the boy and did them all, no doubt, a great deal of good; but no physician in the world but a spiritual one could have persuaded them to take to the road for the purpose.

DEATH PREFERRED TO DISHONOUR.

KUMAR SINGH of Jagadishpur in Behar was over sixty years of age when the mutiny of 1857 broke out. At the time he was generally known for a chief well-affected towards the British government who made large promises of help to it against the rebellious sepoys ; and he would have kept them but that the government did him grave injustice with respect to certain lands of his which it appropriated. Kumar singh protested with more spirit than prudence, and while the minds of the British administrators of the country were in a state of great ferment, his words and actions were easily misunderstood and he was set down for a secret, though not an open, enemy. The next step was short. Some hot-heated British officers sent a force to seize the old chief and occupy Jagadishpur to nip his rebellion in the bud. His home was taken, the temples of his gods desecrated and his estate declared forfeit. Kumàr Singh had managed to escape with his family, but a price was set upon his head. Thus goaded to rebellion which he had not intended, the tiger qualities in the Rajput were roused. He vowed vengeance

and although he did not cherish any hopes of victory over the mighty British, he was intoxicated with the idea of killing as many of the enemy as he could before he lay down his own life. He armed his retainers as best as he could —even the ladies of the family—and fell like a thunderbolt on the British who were in occupation at Jagadishpur. It was a short but sanguinary battle. Kumàr Singh's men were mown down like corn by the reaper's scythe. When all was lost, the chief's wife and daughters and about a hundred other ladies of the family deliberately took up their positions before the mouths of their own guns, bade the gunners fire and were blown out of existence! They preferred death to dishonour.

ONE WORD THAT REFORMED.

BABU Swarup Chandra Banerji of Pataldanga, Calcutta, had a sound education in western literature, was generous, sweet tempered and candid. But his besetting vice was drinking.

Once upon a time he wanted the services of a thatcher and one, named Shambhu, being called in, he showed him his work to do and asked him to begin at once whereupon the man said, "Master, I shall begin day after to-morrow; I have some unfinished work in hand which will take me the two intervening days." Swarup Bàbu agreeing said, "Is it then settled? I hope you will not go back upon your word." Shambhu quickly answered, "Am I a drunkard, sir, that I shall do so?" These words, most probably unintentionally uttered, for the man might have no motive to offend his employer, sunk deep in Banerji's heart and cut it. After a minute's silence he said meekly with his eyes bent on the ground, "Shambhu, is a drunkard so low? Well, then, I give up drinking this moment and will never touch wine in life—so help me, God!"

The gentleman was as good as his word.

A SEVERE REPRIMAND.

THE Hindus have little respect for the Mosaic commandment, "Leave thy father and mother and cleave unto thy wife." On the contrary, their laws impose upon them the duty of the profoundest love and obedience to their parents, relatively to whose place the wife's is far below. Two famous verses from the *shastras* (laws) are as follow :—"Your father is your heaven, your religion ; and he is surely the object of your devotion. You have pleased all the gods in the skies when you have pleased your father ;" and "The mother (and the mother country) are higher far than heaven itself."

These teachings by which the average Hindu guides himself should be remembered in order to understand the point of the story I tell below.

Bàbu Ràmtanu Lahiri, a high caste Brahman, joined the theistic church founded by the great Ràmmohan Roy and broke loose from the Hindu religious customs one of which is for the Brahman to wear the sacred thread. Lahiri's old father was an orthodox Hindu who strongly opposed his son's apostacy, and his discarding of the sacred thread ; and, regarding the latter matter,

he took Ramtanu's disobedience so keenly to heart that it hastened his death. This fact was known to many among whom was young Lahiri's friend, Vidyasagar of philanthropic memory.

Years afterwards Lahiri called on his friend one day and begged him to get him a Brahman cook for his household. "Well," said Vidyasagar, "Your theistic principles recognise no distinctions of caste. Why should you want a Brahman for a cook ? Why not a low caste man, an "untouchable," who would be cheaper?" Ramtanu answered, "Personally I can have no objection ; but my wife has not yet got rid of her prejudices. She refuses to take food cooked by other than a Brahman." Whereupon with a brow knit in seriousness and deep displeasure the great man to whom his parents were as deities incarnate on earth said, "Ramtanu, I am really ashamed of you. A man of pious pretensions, who could not oblige his father by retaining his sacred thread and broke his heart and caused his death in grief by his unfilial disobedience, is anxious to oblige his wife by procuring her a Brahman cook, though personally he makes no distinction between a Brahman and an "untouchable" butcher! Lahiri hung down his head.

A NAWAB RIGHTLY SERVED.

MAN has always felt the most uncontrollable desire for the thing which has been expressly forbidden him. The interdiction about the thick veil, which covers the face of the Indian woman whenever she comes out of the seclusion of her apartments in the house, is an edict as clear as any of the Ten Commandments,— "Thou shalt not seek to raise the veil upon a woman's face." Of course, only strangers and outsiders are forbidden, not the woman's own kith and kin. A disregard of this time-honoured prohibition was once productive of serious consequences as I shall relate below.—

Sarfaraz Khan, *nawab* of Bengal, once met in the precincts of his palace at Dacca a niece of Muhabbat Jung, his minister, and begged her to withdraw her veil for a moment, so that he might have the happiness of looking at her face. She was a famous beauty of her age. The modest damsel was covered with confusion ; but quickly recovering herself she pleaded eloquently for her honour and declined to gratify his curiosity. The exquisite grace of her bearing, her distress and the delicious tones of her voice

charmed the Nawab the more and fired with a hasty passion he put out his hand and removed the veil from her flushed face. He gazed on her lovely countenance for a few seconds and then, dropping the drapery, he asked forgiveness for his rudeness and paying the beauty some princely compliments, passed on.

The girl fled in tears to her uncle and with mixed indignation and shame narrated the sad tale of her disgrace and immediately afterwards destroyed herself with poison.

Within a few hours Muhabbat called on his master, the *nawab*, drawn sword in hand and sternly demanded satisfaction for his outrageous conduct. Sarfaraz was not a coward; he answered the challenge. They fought but had not to fight long. In a few minutes the *nawab* was cleft through the head and lay at his minister's feet. Universal praise, not a word of condemnation, met this spirited action of Muhabbat who was, some years afterwards, raised to the *nawabship* under the title of Murshid Kuli Khan.

TRUST RECOMPENSED.

If you will have faithful service from your men, trust them. Trust, like the philosopher's stone, will turn baseness into goodness, while suspicion will further deprave the bad heart. Here is an instance to the point :

A magistrate of Nudia in Bengal, being anxious to cut a road through a forest, employed the convicts under his charge for the purpose. The labour was arduous and particularly troublesome to the convicts in consequence of the difficulty which they encountered in working in their manacles. The magistrate was known to be a man of benevolent disposition and a deputation of the convicts waited on him to pray that their fetters might be removed while at work and they pledged their word that not a single man among them would take advantage of his goodness and escape through the facilities afforded by the removal. They also pointed out that the work would be more speedily and efficiently performed under the condition they begged for. The magistrate after a short deliberation determined to hazard the chance of what might be a very serious affair to himself and relieved the men of

their chains. His trust was fully rewarded. The nine miles of jungle road were cleared in much shorter time than he had expected, while every evening the labourers returned to the jail at the appointed hour and not a single man of them was lost.

INDIAN SPIRITUALITY.

ONLY those who are intimately acquainted with the Indian know what a rich mine of spirituality his mind is. Any man or woman of the country is a potential saint. The most wordly-minded, the roughest, and the most ignorant person of today may be seen tomorrow to have altogether changed, as by magic, to have renounced the world, been the meekest of the meek, and enlightened with the highest of all knowledge—the knowledge of God. Such a sudden transformation was wrought in many Indians whose lives have been recorded and in a great many more who have lived and died obscure. I shall tell here of one, Shyama Kanta Banerji of Ducca.

At school he devoted far more attention to physical exercise than to mental; consequently, he far more developed his muscles than his kowledge of the three R's. At 20 he was a famous gymnast and wrestler and delighted in nothing more than in kicking up rows in the streets and fighting professional wrestlers. His early ambition was to enter the army; but in his days military service was not open to the Bangalee.

So, for want of the better outlet to his energies he got himself enrolled in the personal guard of the feudatory chief of Tippera. He served the prince for a few years ; then tired of the service for the work was that of a holiday soldier which consisted in escorting the rájá from the palace to the *durbar* and from the *durbar* back to the palace ; no excitement, no giving and taking of blows. He took to taming wild beasts—tigers and lions, breaking heavy stones on the chest, lifting heavy weights, and such other Herculean feats. By and by he started a circus of his own and travelled all over India giving exhibitions, winning fame and heaps of money. One would have thought that this man—this tamer of wild beasts, this eater of the fat and drinker of the strong, this worshipper of mammon—was farthest from the threshold of heaven. But no ! one word wrought a revolution in him. His whole nature was changed and he was hurled right into the bosom of God. At Benares he met a holy man in the streets who looked him straight in the face and said "Well, strong man, you have tamed the fierce beasts of the forest, but what of the fiercer beasts in your own bosom—have you tamed them ?"

Shyamà Kànta was electrified. He shook in every limb as his own tigers shook at his steadfast gaze. Within a month from that day he disposed of his beasts, dismissed the men of his troupe and retired into the Himalayan mountains to struggle with "the fiercer beasts in his own bosom." He subdued them in good time. He was now a holy man, a hermit who meekly sought for nothing but the grace of God.

A WORTHY MAN AND HIS WORTHY WIFE.

THE late Babu Pratap Chandra Roy was a poor man; but he was ambitious. His highest ambition was to publish an English translation of the vast Sanskrit epic, the Mahàbhàrat, one of the grandest books of the world. The enterprise was stupendous, but he undertook it. He begged for money-contributions, in aid of his work, of all in India and England who might appreciate his project and were in a position to give such help and he was not altogether disappointed. But it was his indomitable zeal and energy and his power of organisation which carried him successfully through his 12 years of hard labour at the head of a syndicate of Sanskrit and English scholars. But alas! he could not finish his self-imposed task. Death cut him off within a short time after the 94th volume had been given to the world. On his last bed, as during the last 12 years or more of his life, he could hardly think of any other thing but his Mahàbhàrat. So, he enjoined it solemnly on his wife, Sundaribàlà, that she should see to it that his unfinished mission was finished by her. "Dearest wife," said he with almost his last

breaths, "You shall not help my soul to salvation by merely performing my *sradh* (funeral rites) after I am gone, but also by bringing to a successful close the work I have not been given time enough to complete. My soul is tied to it and it shall not be freed until you have fully obeyed my wish. Save every pice you can for it even stinting yourself in the necessaries of life, sell the clothes on your back for it, if need be, and slave for it; then shall you be true wife to me."

It was a worthy woman on whom the worthy man's dying injunction was laid. Sundaribàlà lovingly and dutifully obeyed it and that at great personal sacrifices.

FAITH OR SUPERSTITION.

FIRM faith in what is true, even in what is not true, sometimes works miracles as the two short stories given below will show. "It is faith which matters, not what you put it in"—says a school of Indian philosophers.

Influenza raged in Jeswant Rào Holkàr's camp while that Maharatta chief was fighting the British troops under Lord Lake. A poor trooper of one of his Irregular Corps who had been suffering for long had a vision which directed him to feed any of his master's horses with oat and pronounce a certain formula, while doing so, for a lasting cure of his disease. The soldier believed in the oracle with his whole soul and as soon as he could get out of his pallet, he walked as fast as he could to the Holkar's stables with a quantity of the grain and as he tied the bag to the head of a horse, he said solemnly, as directed, "Take this in the name of Jeswant Rào Holkàr, for to him both you and I owe all that we have." Strange to say that from that moment he felt himself relieved, and the fever never returned. An account of this wondrous cure soon spread and many others tried the experiment. In some of these cases it proved successful, but in most it did not. The failures were easily attributed by the *wise* to want of sincere faith in the experimenters.

In the latter end of 1831 a blight committed a sad havoc in the wheat fields of a portion of the Punjab and the cultivators were in despair. One day a cowherd driving his cattle to water at a reach of the Beas near the village of Jasrathi was reported to have had a vision that told him that the waters of that reach, taken up and conveyed to the fields in pitchers would effectually keep off the blight from the wheat, provided the pitchers were not suffered to touch the ground on the way. The waters of the Beas had never been known before to be possessed of blight-preventing or any other virtues ; yet the vision was believed in, as the report of it spread from village to village, for a hundred miles round. The water was to be carried in the manner stated above and sprinkled along the boundary of the field and the unexpected portion was to be poured into a hole dug at one corner of it and no where else. All this was done by thousands—by some very carefully and in full faith, and it is the tradition that their fields were saved. Others did not derive any benefit from their labour ; perhaps, their faith in the efficacy of the water was not so strong.

Real, whole-souled faith is an extremely rare thing ; he who possesses it can work miracles. The days of miracles, some people think, are not yet over

AN INSTANCE OF FILIAL AFFECTION.

YOUR feelings for others—of love or hatred, of respect or disrespect, of benevolence or malevolence—are expressed in a countless variety of ways. Ràjà Nikhil Nàth Roy's love and veneration for his departed father was shown on a particular occasion in a peculiar way. When his son, Girijà Nàth, grew to man's estate, Nikhil Nàth entrusted him with the management of a certain portion of his vast property. For the purpose of his work, the young man wanted an office-room and finding none of the available ones in the house suitable to his purpose, he reopened the long disused sitting room of his grand-father and established himself there. It was an old room with doors and windows in a ruinous condition, fitted up with out-of-date furniture and decorated with pictures upon the walls which did not interest modern men. So, the young heir, without the knowledge or permission of his father, who was sojourning in a Himalayan station, had the old doors and windows replaced by new ones, the room newly upholstered and the walls adorned with pictures according to his modern taste. He was going to have the walls

painted afresh when his father returned home. As soon as the latter heard what had taken place in the room, he expressed his highest displeasure. "Girija," said he to his son, "my father sat in this room while he lived; I believe his spirit haunts it, now that he is gone; for he loved it. You should not have sought to dislodge it from its ancient possession. My father loved the furniture, the paintings and the curtains which were in it; you should not have pained his spirit by removing them. In a word, you should not have gone into the room and interfered with the things in it. I hear the old things which you have removed have not been yet destroyed; that is a mercy. I shall presently have them all restored to their wonted places. The room shall look again as it did in my father's life-time. It is a holy shrine to me and while I live, I will allow no vendalism. Here is a cheque for you for 30 thousand rupees; have an office built and furnished for yourself with the money."

Here was filial affection of a high order.

AN APPARENT RUDENESS.

"THINGS are not what they seem ;" of course, sometimes. One is most likely to commit mistakes in the matter of man's manners as indicative of his heart.

Srimanta Rào, chief of Deori, was in the company of his feudal lord, the ràjà of Orchha in Bundelkhand, when the latter was paying a ceremonial visit to the agent to the Governor General of India at Tehri, Srimanta was a liberally educated, handsome young man—a perfect master of good manners ; yet a certain action of his was misunderstood and offence taken.

In the hall of reception Srimanta Rào sat next to Lieutenant Thomas, the agent's aide-de-camp ; and during the interview he asked the chief to allow him to look at his beautiful gold-hilted sword. The chief held it fast which so offended the Englishman that in his irritation he slighted the whisper in which the chief said that he would wait upon him in his tent in the course of the day and show him the sword. When the interview was over, Thomas mentioned the incident to the agent and said that he felt very much hurt at the incivility of the chief.

But the agent knew him well; so, he answered that Srimanta was so perfect a gentleman that he felt quite sure that he would explain all to his satisfaction, when he called upon him. In this interview the chief explained that if he had made over his sword to the English officer and the latter had drawn it from the scabbard in the situation in which they were—with the tent full of the ràjà's personal attendants and surrounded by a devoted and not very orderly soldiery—the consequence might have been serious. Any man outside might have seen the gleaming blade and not knowing why it had been drawn, might have suspected treachery and called out to the rescue. Some blood should have been shed surely, before quiet was restored. "Therefore," finished the young chief, "did I hold the sword fast and risked the imputation of rudeness. I hope you are satisfied."

Lieutenant Thomas was not only satisfied, but also grateful. He was so delighted with him that he begged for and obtained a portrait of him and cherished it.

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BROTHER AND SISTER.

"LIKE parent like child" let us say, though the Bengali proverb does not always come true. In this story I shall tell of two of Ramtanu Lahiri's children, Navakumàr, son and Indumati, daughter.

Navakumàr was a young man and a promising practitioner of medicine. But he fell ill and in a short time developed symptoms of consumption. After some treatment in Calcutta he was by his physician's advice removed to Bhagalpur in Behar to try the climate of that healthy place. Indumati, his maiden sister, about 16, accompanied him to care for him. He rallied for a time and his relatives fondly thought that he was out of danger. But no; the insidious disease returned after some time in a worse form. Sister Indu's labour in nursing her brother had always been strenuous. Her devotion was absolutely self-sacrificing now. The woful result was, as might be feared, that she caught the contagion. Their old parents were at this time with them. You may well imagine their agony of mind and fear. They took them to Arrah, another healthy station in Behar, for a further change and gave the best medical aid their small means allowed.

But all was unavailing. The brother and sister sank rapidly. But it was angelic in them that each was far more anxious for the comfort and recovery of the other than for those of himself or herself. A hundred times a day each earnestly enquired of his or her parents and other attendants if the other was feeling better and more comfortable and when the doctor came, each earnestly pressed him to pay all his best attention to the other. I am sure that if either could, like the Moghul emperor, Baber, who, according to the legend, had transferred to himself his son Humayoon's sure death,—if either might be accepted as sacrifice for the other, they would have gratefully offered themselves. The brother knew that his sister had caught the fell disease by her devotion to him and this consciousness was more painful to him than the prospect of his sure death; and the sister sincerely and anxiously prayed that as there was already an offering in her person, humble though it was, God might accept it in His grace and in consideration of it save her brother's life. Nothing pleased her more than the hope of the fulfilment of this prayer. But it was all otherwise ordained. Indu went first; Navakumàr followed about nine months afterwards.

HONESTY REWARDED.

PANCHANAN DAS of Teota in the district of Dacca was born in poverty and was dependent on the charity of some relatives for his maintenance up to about 18 years of age. Very little even of such education as was available in those days, was given him ; but honesty and amiability were born in him and he never failed to gain the good will of those with whom he came in contact.

This young man went out into the world seeking to earn his bread. He attached himself to some merchants who traded in tobacco in northern Bengal and with them landed at the station of Khànsàmà on the Atrai. He soon found work there in a rich merchant's house of business, and although he began as an apprentice, it did not take him long to rise in his employer's esteem and favour by his honesty, intelligence and industry. He was sometimes entrusted with transactions of considerable responsibility.

Once upon a time tobacco went very low in the market and the merchant, Panchànan's

employer who had large stocks upon his hands, was ill at ease. But our young man knew that the darkest night is generally followed by the brightest morning—that a great depression in the bazar is generally premonitory of a great rise. So he often begged his master to keep up his spirits. Nay, he did more. On one of these days while walking about the river-port, he observed a fleet of boats laden with tobacco which had just anchored and were waiting for customers. He bade for the whole cargo on behalf of his employer, quickly struck a very advantageous bargain and finished with pledging his gold ring with the trader for payment of the price. His star was on the ascendant. He returned to the office to hear his employer joyfully exclaim, "Panchànan, excellent news; I have just received letters from Calcutta to advise that tobacco has looked up and is steadily advancing." The next day Panchànan sold off his purchase at over 50 per cent. profit by which he made nearly ten thousand rupees. He brought all the money to his master and told him for the first time the story of his transaction. He begged to be excused for having done a bit of business without his knowledge and permission;

but he had done so, he said, in the confident hope that it would be profitable. The master was delighted, not with the profit, although so large, but with the honesty and genius of the young man to whom he resolved to be as generous as possible. So, he said, "Panchnan, the profit is wholly yours as the transaction was, although done in my name. I lay no claim to it. You are intelligent and industrious ; above all, you are honest. I do not doubt but you will thrive in the world. Build up your fortune on the ten thousand you have justly earned."

He did. He earned a princely fortune, enjoyed it, and left it to his sons at his death. A grandson of his was made a ràjà by the government of British India.

FOR "MOST CONSPICUOUS BRAVERY."

THE achievements of the Indian army, since the world-war, now happily over, began, constitute a glorious record. They have been the theme of respectful admiration of the world. Side by side with their British comrades near Ypres the soldier-sons of India, helped to stem the first onslaught of the Germans in the autumn of 1914 and thus to save the cause of both the allies and civilisation. Since that time on many battlefields—in Mesopotamia, in Gallipoli, in Arabia, in Palestine—they have fought to the very end for the British Empire of which their own country forms a part. Pathans, Punjabees, Sikhs, Rajputs, Gurkhas, and the other war-like races of India have covered themselves with glory. Perhaps, the most coveted decoration open to the soldier of the British Empire is the Victoria Cross. No fewer than ten Indian warriors have won it for their "Most Conspicuous Bravery" which word *bravery*, besides what it commonly means, connotes, I think, in military language such collateral virtues as selfless devotion to duty, comradery and the truest love. I shall sample it in a few short stories taken from contemporary records.

I

Of rifleman Kulabir Thàpà of the 2nd battalion, 3rd Queen Alexandra's own Gurkh rifles, it is recorded that when himself wounded on the 25th September, 1915 during operations against the German trenches south of Manquissart, he found a badly wounded soldier of the 2nd Liecestershire Regiment behind the first line German trench and, though urged by the British soldier to save himself, he remained with him all day and night. In the early morning of the following day in misty weather he brought him out through the German wire entanglements and, leaving him in a place of comparative safety, returned and brought in two more wounded soldiers, his own country men, one after the other. He then went back in broad daylight for the British soldier and brought him in also, carrying him most of the way and being at most points under the enemy's fire.

II

Lance Nàik Lalla of the 41st Dogras found a British officer of another regiment lying severely wounded close to the enemy. He dragged him into a temporary shelter which he himself had

made and in which he had already bandaged four wounded men. He bandaged the officer's wound also and had just finished when he heard the calls from the adjutant of his own regiment who was lying in the open in a frightfully mutilated condition. The enemy were not more than one hundred yards distant and it seemed certain death to go out to the place where the adjutant lay. But Lalla went out nevertheless and came to the officer and proposed to him to crawl back to shelter with him on his back. This not being permitted, he stripped off his own clothing and wrapped the wounded man in it to keep him as warm as possible and stayed with him till just before dark when he returned to shelter.

After dark he bore the first wounded officer to the main trenches and then returning with a stretcher carried his adjutant on it to the same shelter.

III

Sepoy Chattar Singh of the 9th Bhopal Infantry left cover to assist his commanding officer who was lying wounded and helpless in the open. He bound up the officer's wounds and

then dug cover for him with his entrenching tool being exposed all the while to very heavy rifle fire. For five hours until nightfall he remained beside his officer shielding him with his own body on the exposed side. It is the oldest canon of self-sacrifice that a man be willing to lay down his life for his fellow-man; and this Sepoy Chattar Singh most truly was. Then when darkness came, he went back under its cover for assistance and with it brought the officer into safety.

IV

Naik Shàhama Khàn was in charge of a machine gun section in an exposed portion in front of and covering a gap in a new British line within 150 yards of the enemy's position. He beat off three counter-attacks and worked his gun single-handed after all his men, except two belt-fillers had become "casualities." For three hours he held the gap under a heavy fire while it was being made secure. When his gun was knocked out by hostile fire, he and his two belt-fillers held their ground with rifles till ordered to withdraw. With three men sent to assist him he then brought back his gun, ammunition and a severely wounded man who was

unable to walk. But for his gallantry and determination the British line, it has been candidly admitted, must have been penetrated by the enemy that day.

V

This is from a London newspaper of the 21st June, 1915 :—

"A Victoria Cross has been awarded to Rifleman Karan Bàhàdur Rànà of the Gurkha rifles for "conspicuous bravery" and resource in action under adverse conditions and utter contempt of danger in an attack. He, with a few other men, succeeded under intense fire in creeping forward with a Lewis gun in order to engage an enemy machine gun which had caused severe casualities to officers and other ranks who had attempted to put it out of action.

No I of the Lewis gun partly opened fire and was shot immediately. Without a moment's hesitation Karan Bàhàdur pushed the dead man off the gun and in spite of bombs thrown at him and heavy fire from both flanks, he opened fire and knocked out the machine gun crew. Then, switching the fire on the enemy bombers and rifle-men in front of him, he silenced their fire.

He kept his gun in action and showed the greatest coolness in removing defects which had twice prevented the gun from firing. He did magnificient work during the remainder of the day, and when a withdrawal was ordered, assisted with covering fire until the enemy was close to him. He displayed throughout a very high standard of valour and devotion to duty."

Nothing under the sun is absolutely evil. This war has brought out, amongst other things, the best qualities of the Indian fighting man and displayed them before the astonished gaze of the world, just as in the closing years of the last century the Russo-Japanese war had called forth and exhibited those of the Japanese soldier.

Other works by the author.

1. Sacred Tales of India—(*Recommended for Matriculation candidates, Calcutta University*) Messrs Macmillan & Co.

The Westminister Gazette.—"It is a truly wonderful book."

The Glasgow Herald.—"The author tells excellent stories in good, idiomatic English."

Athenaeum.—"The stories are told with a charming *naivete* and in delightful English."

2. True Tales of Indian Life.—(*Prescribed for the higher classes of High English Schools in Bengal*) Messrs Macmillan & Co.

The Madras Christian.—"The stories are well written and worth telling."

Country Life, Strand, London.—"The stories are true to nature and to life."

The Educational Review.—"The book supplies a 'felt need' and we would there were many more of its kind."